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BEN HAMED:

—OR,—

THE CHILDREN OF FATE.

A STORY OF THE EASTERN WORLD.

BY HORACE B. STANIFORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE SYNDIC, AND HIS SLAVE ASSAD.

On all hands the arms of the sons of Islam had been victorious, and the close of the eighth century, and the opening of the ninth, saw the Arabian dominion at its zenith of power and splendor. The followers of Mahomet had not only established one of the most mighty governments of earth, but they had drawn wealth and refinement, and other adjuncts of national power, from conquered nations. Bagdad was the capital, and there the Caliph, Haroun al Raschid, held his court, as Commander of the Faithful, and God's Apostle on earth. Even the fascinating stories of the *Arabian Nights* have not exaggerated the magnificence of Haroun's court, nor have they overrated his power, nor his public spirit. He was in truth the most illustrious of the long line of caliphs; and, while he lived, no man did more for the benefit of the people over whom he had control. Wisdom was his aim and delight, and wise men his chief counsellors and companions. In piety he was true and sincere, and for the good of his subjects he labored with his own hands.

The day was closing in Bagdad, and the deep shades had already thrown themselves across the inner apartments of the market of the money-changers. At the head of the place, behind a counter more costly than the others, sat Elkader, the Syndic of those who dealt in precious metals, and changed money for percentage. He was a tall, spare man, with gray hair and gray beard, but his eyes were black as two coals. Three-score years had been given him of life, and ever since his very boyhood he had been engaged in getting money. His face was hard and cold, and even the crafty Jews, whose stalls were about him, and who worked hard for money, gazed with wonder upon the strange ingenuity with which the Syndic sometimes emptied the pockets of his spendthrift customers.

Of course, Elkader had become very rich. No man save himself knew his riches, though everybody knew that he was immensely wealthy. He had taken many precious jewels for moneys lent, and those jewels were now his, and some of them were far more fitting for the crown of a king, than for the utter darkness of the great old chest in which he kept them secured.

The Syndic of the money-changers looked up and saw that the day was departing, and turning to his table, he continued to gather up the money and ingots that lay there. From a hook by his side he took a large bag made of camel's hide, and began to scrape the money into it. There was money of gold, money of silver, and many bars of pure metal direct from India. When the bag had received all the money, it was of such weight that Elkader could not move it upon the floor; much less could he lift it. In fact, it would seem that no man could raise it up, and that only a cruel man would inflict such a burden upon a mule. When the bag was secured at the mouth, the Syndic turned towards the back of the market, he called the name of Marouf, and thereupon there came forth a black slave, of such huge proportions, that one who knew him not would have started with fear. He was ten spans high, and as broad as an ox. He bowed before the Syndic, and awaited his pleasure.

"Take this bag and follow me," was Elkader's order.

Marouf swung the bag upon his broad shoulder as though it had been filled with feathers, and then followed his master from the market. Elkader's house was upon the bank of the Tigris, and though it looked dark and gloomy from the street, yet within it was furnished with luxurious costliness, while the garden in the rear, which extended to the river, was one of the most beautiful in Bagdad. The Syndic entered his house, and having procured a lamp, he descended to the cellar, which was deep and spacious, and in one corner of which was a door so curiously contrived that it could not be distinguished from the rest of the wall. This door opened by a secret spring, but Marouf knew not where it was, for as soon as he had reached the cellar bottom his master set down his lamp and blind-folded him, and then taking him by the arm, he led him several times about the place by devious ways, until he came to the door. Here he touched the secret spring, and the heavy door slowly swung open, revealing a deep vault beyond, into which the Syndic led his slave. There were many sacks standing against the walls, like the one Marouf had just brought in, and all of them seemed well filled. Then on one side stood a large iron chest; it was seven spans long, four spans high, and four spans wide, and it was secured by four stout locks of solid steel.

The slave set down the bag, and then the Syndic led him away, taking care to close the door behind him. But as soon as Marouf had reached the hall above, his master returned to the cellar and opened the vault and went in. He closed the door after him, and then proceeded to unlock the iron chest, and when he had thrown back the heavy lid the rays of the lamp were flashed back from a thousand bright jewels, that lay there exposed. Elkader stood a while to feast his eyes upon the immense wealth which the chest contained, and then he proceeded to select certain jewels which he had come for. He took out a necklace of pearls and a necklace of rubies, a tiara of diamonds, and several costly rings for the ears and hands, besides bracelets and brooches. These he concealed within the bosom of his vest, and then he relocked the chest and went up to his own private room, where none came unless they were called. Here he placed the jewels upon a table, and then rang a bell; and shortly afterwards the door was opened, and a youth who had not seen more than twenty years of life, entered. His name was Assad, and he was Elkader's slave.

Even the hard-hearted Syndic always felt a thrill of admiration when he saw the youthful slave; for in all Bagdad there was not another youth so handsome. His hair was black, and his eyes were like two stars set in jet. His beard was already grown, and looked like fine silk, in its graceful waves. His features were so very regular that the slightest alteration in any one of them would have been for the worse, and the color of his skin was like the white lily and the deeply blushing rose. His form was slight, and yet full and perfect, and his movements all betrayed a development of nerve and muscle, which showed him to be strong and active. He stood before his master, and though his bearing was respectful, yet a close observer might have detected a curl of contempt about his finely chiselled lips, as his dark eyes rested upon the hard, miser-marked features of the money-changer.

Elkader had no especial love for anything on earth save his wealth; yet he valued Assad next, for among all his slaves this youth was the only one whom he could implicitly trust to handle his money and jewels in his absence. Assad knew the secret of the vault, and he was often sent there to bring gold and precious stones.

"Assad," spoke the Syndic, "you know Ali Shir, the Syndic of the merchants?"

"I know him well, my master," replied the youthful slave.

"And you know his house?"

"Very well. I have carried him money several times."

"So I remember. Now listen, Assad: Ali Shir has a son named Hassan, who is of age in five days from this. He also has a most beautiful slave girl named Morgiana. She is like the full moon in loveliness, and her like is not known elsewhere. Hassan has long been enamored of the handsome slave, and he has demanded her hand in marriage. Ali Shir has meant her for the caliph, but Hassan is headstrong and eager, and his father dares not refuse him, so he has promised him Morgiana's hand. You know the Syndic of the merchants is rich, and he means to bestow upon the wife of his son a portion befitting the station she is to occupy; and for this purpose, he has asked of me some jewels with which to adorn her person. I have selected a quantity here, and you will take them at once to Ali Shir and let him select such as please him. You will observe that the prices are attached to each one, and he will pay you for what he takes ere you come away."

Assad bowed low, in token of obedience, and when the jewels had been carefully tied up in a piece of soft leather, he took them and hid them in his bosom, and then turned away from his master's house. Ali Shir's house was not far from where Elkader lived, but it was on the other side of the river, and Assad had some distance to walk in order to reach the bridge. He had not walked far before he noticed that he was closely followed by some one, but he did not turn, thinking within himself that when he reached the bridge and turned off to cross he should be alone. But he was disappointed in this, for when he had gained the bridge he found his follower still behind him. He turned to see who it was that thus trod upon his own steps, and by the light of the moon, which then shone full and clear, he could see that it was an old man, with flowing white beard, who stooped, from age, but who yet walked nimbly. Assad lagged in his pace, to see if the old man would not pass him, but the old man lagged likewise. Then Assad quickened his pace, and thereupon he that followed did the same. Next Assad stopped, and so did the old man stop.

Surely, thought Assad, this man must know that I carry rich jewels, and he hopes to rob me of them. So he resolved to speak with him, but he took the precaution first to place his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

"Do you follow me for any purpose?" he asked, turning full upon the stranger.

"I do follow thee," replied the old man, "but I mean thee no harm." His voice was kind, and Assad was at once assured. "You came from the house of Elkader, the Syndic of money-changers?"

"I did," answered Assad.

"And you live with him?"

"I am his slave."

"Your name is Assad?"

"Yes."

"You have been with Elkader for some years?"

"Ever since I can remember. My father was his slave before me, I have been told, though I never saw him."

As Assad thus spoke, the old man drew nigh to him and gazed up into his face. The youth saw then that he was very old, and that he was clothed in the garb of a common laborer.

"Is thy master kind to thee?" asked the stranger.

"He has never treated me ill."

"Ah—he knows thy pride and thy worth. He fears, were he to wound the one, he might lose the other. You do not love him well."

"By Allah, old man, that cannot matter to you; and moreover I am in haste, for I have business of importance to perform."

"So be it, my son," quickly replied the old man. "But wait while I give into thy hands a packet, which has been entrusted to my keeping for thee." As he spoke he placed his hand in his bosom and drew forth a small packet, which he handed to the youth. "Take it," he continued, "for it is thine."

"But what means this?" asked Assad, not a little surprised at what had happened. "Who art thou?"

"I am called Morkanna, though I am of no kin with the one-eyed rebel who renounced the true God, and raised his accursed hand against the Prince of the Faithful. If you would seek me ever, you will find me near the bazaar of the Balsora merchants, where I have a little shop in which I mend lamps, and other metallic vessels."

"But what is this?" asked Assad, raising the packet he had received.

"You must find out for yourself. All I can tell you is, it is yours, and was sent by one who had the right to do so. Neglect not your business further. You know where to find me if you want me."

Thus speaking, the old man turned about, and after watching him until he was out of sight, Assad pursued his way. He lifted the packet in his hand, and he found it heavy and solid. It was small; not over three or four inches across, and an inch in thickness, and was of a square shape. It was neatly enveloped in a leathern wrapper, and firmly stitched together at the seam. At length the youth remembered the business he had in hand, and thrusting the packet into his bosom, he hurried on. When he reached Ali Shir's house, he found that the merchant had gone out and would not return until the next day; so he retraced his steps, and when he reached his master's dwelling, he explained the reason of his bringing back all the jewels, and at the same time he offered to return them; but the Syndic said:

"No; keep them till the morrow, and when Ali Shir returns, go you to his house with them, and if he be not there, go to his shop. I remember now that Ali told me he thought some of going to his house in the country. He will be back early in the day."

After this Assad retired and concealed the jewels in his own apartment. It was nothing new for him thus to have immense sums left in his charge, for often, when the Syndic was going away to be gone a few days, he would leave much business in the hands of the trusty slave, and he always found it faithfully attended to. And hence had Assad always received better treatment from Elkader's hands than had the others of the household, for the Syndic was by nature a hard, cruel man, and his power in the city was great; but he seldom, if ever, allowed his temper to injure his own interests. He knew that Assad could not bear an indignity, or suffer wrong a second time from the same hand; so he was careful towards him.

CHAPTER II.

ASSAD FINDS ALI SHIR—AND SOMETHING MORE.

As soon as Assad had secured the jewels, he sat down to the table where he was in the habit of reading and writing,—for he kept nearly all of his master's accounts,—and having drawn the lamp near him, he proceeded to open the packet he had received. He cut the cord, and when the leathern case was off, he came to another of blue silk, which was bound on only by a ribbon. This he easily removed, and within he found a book-like case of solid gold, profusely set with precious stones. For a while he gazed upon the rich case with wonder, but he soon noticed a clasp, and having removed this, the case opened, and Assad beheld the picture of the most beautiful female face he had ever seen. For a long while he sat and gazed upon that face ere he could fully realize all its loveliness. The hair was like the deep night, and the face like a radiant sun. Upon every feature beauty sat enthroned, and the whole was a perfect heaven of beauty and purity. The youth continued to gaze until his head and heart both ached, and then he let the case fall upon the table. He closed his eyes, but still the face was present to his vision. He looked upon the picture again, and this time he pressed it to his lips, and murmured a few broken sentences of passionate poesy:

"What is it that hath thus come to my eyes? What is it that hath thus come to my heart?

"Why is the sharp sword thus driven to my soul? Why is the shaft of love thus sent to my vitals?

"Is there on earth a balm for the wound? Is there a healing portion for an anguish such as mine?

"Most merciful God, lead me to this fair one; lead me beside the calm waters where she standeth, that I may see her reflection, if the truth be now told me.

"O, thou one living and only adorable God, lead me to this fair one, or else take from me the memory of my soul!

"How shall I forget her if I live? And how shall I live if I forget her not?"

So spoke the youth, and when he had spoken, he gazed once more upon the picture. There was a sweet smile upon the ruby lips, and the beaming eyes were fixed upon him with such a fond and loving expression that he caught the case to his heart, and fairly wept with emotion. Thus he remained more than an hour, and when he retired, he placed the golden case beneath his pillow.

After this the youth remembered how he had come by the picture, and he began to wonder where the old lamp-mender got it. In short, he wondered about everything connected with the affair, and he prayed that daylight might come quickly, so that he could go and find the old man.

As soon as the sun was up Assad was dressed, and having looked once more upon the picture, he started off in search of the lamp-mender. He found the quarter of the merchants of Balsora, and he inquired for Mokanna. He was directed to the old man's stall, but it was closed, and no one knew where the lamp-mender lived. Assad waited an hour, but Mokanna did not come, and then the youth remembered the business he had to do with Ali Shir, and he turned unwillingly away, to do his duty. He went to his apartments and got the jewels, and then proceeded to the dwelling of the Syndic of the merchants, who had just returned. Assad was at once conducted to the merchant's private apartment, where the jewels were produced.

"By Allah!" cried Ali Shir, as he handled over the valuable trinkets, "these are glorious. Never a queen was adorned with aught more beautiful."

Assad seconded the laudatory remarks of the merchant, and at length the jewels were selected, the Syndic having chosen more than half of all the youth had brought. The price of these was found to be seven thousand pieces of gold, and upon looking in his coffer, Ali Shir found that he had not half of that sum with him.

"It is all at my shop," he said.

"I can wait here while you go and bring it," returned Assad; "for my master bade me bring him the money."

"Certainly. That is just. He who sells is worthy of the price. Remain you here in this room—here are books to beguile the time—while I go to my shop and get the money."

So Ali Shir went away, and Assad was left alone. He opened one of the books which lay near him, and found it to be a volume of poems written on the finest vellum, and beautifully illuminated. He tried to read, but the first poem he looked upon was of love, and his mind was carried at once to the picture he had received the night before. He drew forth the case from his bosom and opened it, and while he was gazing upon the picture a door was opened which he had not before noticed, and a female entered the apartment. Assad looked up, and with a quick cry he started to his feet. He saw before him the living counterpart of the picture he had been gazing upon.

But the conduct of the maiden was not less strange, for no sooner did she see Assad's face than she uttered a low cry, and sank down insensible. The youth sprang forward and raised the beautiful girl in his arms and bore her to a seat, and in a moment afterwards she revived. When she opened her eyes she found Assad bending over her, with one arm about her waist.

"Who'rt thou?" she whispered.

"I am Assad, the slave of the Syndic of the money-changers. Now, who art thou?"

"I am Morgiana, the slave girl of the Syndic of merchants."

"And why did you swoon at the sight of me?" asked Assad.

"Tell me first why you were started upon beholding me," returned Morgiana, gazing up into the youth's face with an expression so tender that his heart was gone from him.

Assad reached forth and took the golden case and showed it to her.

"Here," he said, "is the cause of my emotion. Do you recognize it?"

The maiden took the golden case, and as she saw her own face pictured therein, she was moved by a powerful emotion. Then she put her hand within her own bosom, and drew therefrom a case exactly like the one she held in her hand, and this she handed to Assad. He took it and opened it, and his emotions may be better imagined than described when he found his own likeness contained within, and surely executed by the same hand which had painted the other.

"Where did you find this?" he asked, as soon as he could command his speech.

"I have had it four days," she answered. "I was at the shop of a jeweller, with one of my female companions, when an old man entered, asking alms. I gave him a piece of silver, and he asked me to raise my veil, saying at the same time that he could not receive alms from one whose face he could not see. I raised my veil, for I could not refuse so old a man so simple a request. As soon as he saw my face he beckoned for me to step aside, and then he gave me a packet, the covering of which was leather, neatly stitched up, and told me 'twas sent to me by one who knew me well. I asked him many questions but he would answer me nothing; only he told me his name was Mokanna, and that his shop was near the bazaar of the Balsora merchants. I have sent my trusty girl there, twice, but she could not find him. Why did you send it to me?"

"*Me?*" uttered Assad. "I did not send it!"

"Then who should?" asked Morgiana, wonderingly.

"There is the mystery. Do you not see that you are in the same plight? Did you send me that?" at the same time pointing to the picture of herself, which she now held in her hand.

"No, no,—as God is most merciful, I did not!"

"Then who should?"

"By Allah! I must answer thee as thou answeredst me—there is the mystery."

"And is it not most wonderful?" pursued Assad, gazing tenderly into the maiden's beautiful face.

"It is, indeed," returned Morgiana, returning the gaze of the handsome youth.

"And more than this," added Assad, "I know that these pictures were never painted in Bagdad. One hand did them both, and you may see from the curious workmanship of the cases, and from the setting of the stones, that they were never fashioned here. Such devices are unknown in Bagdad; and yet, who out of this city can know me, since I was born in Elkader's house?"

"And I, too, was born here," said the maid-

en; "here in this very house, if Ali Shir speaks truly. So who should know me?"

"I must see the old man," resumed Assad, "and from him I may gain some information."

At this juncture they both bowed their heads, and soon an idea which had escaped Morgiana's mind, came to her; nor is it strange that the thought should have been present with her, since this was the merchant's most private apartment, into which none came but by his command, she having been ordered, on the previous day, to appear here at the present time.

"How gained you access here?" she asked, with much earnestness.

"I came with jewels from which Ali Shir was to select for your bridal equipment. He had not all the money to pay for them, and he left me here while he went to his shop to bring it. You are to be wedded with his son, Hassan."

The youth's voice trembled as he spoke this last sentence, and tears filled his eyes. Morgiana gazed full upon him, and it was with a mighty effort that she kept her emotions from overcoming her.

"Would you keep that picture you hold in your hands?" she asked.

Assad gazed upon it. It was the picture of himself.

"No, no," he answered, "for in my mirror I may see it at any moment. Let me rather have that one which is of right mine, for I cannot live without it."

"Then take it," the maiden said, at the same time handing him the semblance of herself. "But I must have the other, for the old man gave it me, and it is mine."

So Assad gave her the likeness of himself, and she put it away in her bosom, from whence she had first taken it. Then the youth put the likeness of the beautiful girl into his bosom, and a tear fell upon his hand as he did so.

"Will you give your hand to Hassan?" he asked, tremulously.

"And if I should?"

"Then I can only cherish thine image in my heart till the pangs of my deep love take away my life."

"You do love me then?" faintly murmured Morgiana, striving with all her might to seem calm.

"O, as the angels love their God, and as the gentle dove loves its mate. Thy heart shall never know a love more true than mine."

A moment Morgiana gazed into the youth's face, and then her emotions overcame her, and with one low sob of joy, she fell upon his bosom. How long they remained thus, neither of them could tell, but they were aroused by hearing the voice of Ali Shir in the hall, and Morgiana started to her feet in an instant.

"My master cometh," she cried, "and I must hasten away."

"But how shall I see thee again?" eagerly asked Assad? "O, the merchant will make thee marry with his son."

"No, no—he shall not. If you cannot see me before, I will plead indisposition. I will feign some dreadful malady. We can do something. Go to the shop of Mokanna until you find him. He may help us. Perhaps we may meet there. I have a most trusty attendant, one whom Ali Shir has given to me—Gulnare is her name; and if I send her to thee, obey her in all she may ask of thee. Go, seek the old man, and in the meantime peace be with thee, and may God, whose name be adored, smile upon our loves!"

Assad pressed the beauteous being once more to his bosom, and having imprinted a warm kiss upon her pure brow, she darted away, and the youth had just composed himself, when the merchant entered.

Ali Shir paid down the money, and Assad gathered up the remaining jewels, and having secured the gold, he departed.

CHAPTER III.

ASSAD FINDS THE LAMP-MENDER.

All the rest of that day Assad was kept busy with his master in counting out money, and making up accounts, and though his brain was in a whirl, yet he made no mistakes. The load of love he carried in his heart was now a joyous burden, though much anxiety and doubt dwelt with it. It was not until the shades of night had fairly settled down over the city, that the youth got his liberty, and then he knew it would be too late to find Mokanna in his shop, so he put off his visit until the following morning. When he retired to his own chamber, he took out the picture, and gazed upon it. It seemed as beautiful as ever, but he felt that he had now seen a face more beautiful still. The original—the living reality—was far more beautiful than this ideal; yet he cherished the picture, and in his soul a new being had sprung up into life; the great fountain had been opened, and there gushed forth those new incentives which changed at once the whole spirit of his existence. He was no longer the slave of the Syndic, in soul, and he had resolved that even the labor of his hands had now a nobler object than such servitude as had heretofore marked his existence. Various were the plans that passed through his mind, and they were as vague as were the dreams that came to him when he slept.

On the next morning Assad was early astir, and without his breakfast he betook himself to the shop of the lamp mender, and he had the good fortune to find the old man in and engaged in mending an old copper lamp.

"You are at work early, good father," said the youth, as he entered the little shop.

"And you are as early as I," returned Mokanna.

"Ay," resumed Assad, "for I have the utmost reason for it. You gave me a miniature night before last."

"Ah—was it a miniature I gave thee?"

"Didst thou not know it was?"

"How should I know, since the packet was tightly sewed up ere it was placed in my hands?"

"But you also gave the same kind of a packet to Morgiana, the slave girl of Ali Shir."

"I did, my son. And was hers, too, a miniature?"

"Ay, hers was a likeness of myself, though highly flattered, while mine was a likeness of her, as near as such transcendent loveliness can be put upon ivory."

"The painter must be wondrous artful who can impress a noble beauty beyond thine own," said the old man, gazing upon his visitor with a look of admiration.

"Do not flatter me, good father, but tell me whence came those pictures."

"First tell me if you have seen Morgiana."

"Yea, I saw her yesterday morning."

"And have those pictures been of any effect?"

"Ay, most surely, for her heart is wholly mine, and mine is all her own. She loves me, for she has confessed it. O, keep me not in suspense, but tell me whence came those pictures."

"My son, listen to me while I tell you the truth. Who painted those pictures I know not. They were given to me by an old man in this very city, and he obtained from me a promise that I would give the one with the brown leather to Assad, the slave of the Syndic Elkader; and that the one with yellow leather I would give to Morgiana, the slave of the Syndic Ali Shir. I have done his bidding, and can tell you no more."

"But you know more than this. Those cases were never made here, nor were the pictures made here. The devices upon the gold are of Tartar origin, and the setting of the stones looks like the work of some northern craftsman."

"Thou art observing, my son, and may perhaps teach me; but at present seek not to dive into the past. You have enough in the future to occupy your attention."

"But answer me this," urged Assad, with much eagerness and emotion. "Do you not know something of the design of those who caused these cases to be delivered as they have been?"

"I will not deny that, my son."

"Then will you not tell me concerning it?"

Mokanna bowed his head a few moments, and when he again looked up there was an expression of curious import upon his face.

"Surely, my son," he said, "you are too witty not to see that whoever sent those pictures, meant that you and Morgiana should become acquainted with each other; and from such an acquaintance no man would look for anything but love between such as you. Hence, you may reasonably infer that 'twas meant that you should love the maiden. Had I come to you and told you of Ali Shir's slave girl, you would never have sought her, for the mere report of beauty is only to the mind, and cannot inspire love; but the presence of the fair girl's face, even though in transcript, appealed at once to the heart, and love was the consequence."

"Ay, most aged father, you speak truly when you say that love was the consequence; but do you realize that the next consequence must be death, if our loves be not consummated in a more perfect union?"

"I understand that," replied Mokanna.

"And yet we are far separated. Morgiana is affianced to the son of the richest merchant in Bagdad, and I am but a simple slave."

"Yet Morgiana is not higher in station than thou. She, too, is a slave, and her master is not so wealthy as thine. But that there is difficulty I will not deny. You have some obstacles to overcome, but firmness and decision may accomplish your purpose."

Assad bowed his head and pondered. He felt assured that the old man knew more than he chose to tell, but he would not question him more. He understood that some strange fate had thrown Morgiana in his way, but whence came this fate he could not conceive, nor did he choose further to pry into the mystery at present. It was enough for him to know that Morgiana loved him, and that she was willing to be his own. For the present, then, he would pursue the fate with steady zeal, and after the priceless jewel was won, he would have time to search for the key to the mystery. "My life I willingly stake in the enterprise," he said to himself, "and until Morgiana is mine, my life belongs to my fate, and a breath may sweep it away if need be." Thus resolving he turned to Mokanna, and said:

"I know not what may be your friendship for me, but can you help me in my work?"

"I think I can; and if I can, it would hardly be just for me to refuse since I have been an instrument for bringing you into the work. But ere you call upon me for assistance, you must lay some plan of your own. Have you not made some arrangement for meeting with Morgiana?"

"Partly. We had not time to confer much, for the merchant came back ere we had fairly overcome our first wild emotions. But she will send her young slave girl to me when she has formed some plan for a meeting."

"Then you will meet her without much trouble. So far fortune has favored you, for I had supposed you would find some difficulty in gaining a joint interview with the maiden; but this came unsought. May not the same fortune continue with you? At any rate, you must see Morgiana, and when your plans are formed you may come to me. Only promise me this: that you will not leave the city without my knowledge."

Assad promised as the old man had requested, and after some further conversation of little importance he took his leave. He returned to the house of his master. The Syndic had gone to his place of business, and the youth was preparing to follow, when Marouf appeared and beckoned him one side. Assad obeyed the sign at once, for he knew that Marouf loved him with his whole soul. And so it was, for the gigantic black held such an affection for the handsome youth, that he would have willingly laid down his life for him in a just cause.

"Assad," spoke the black, as soon as they had reached a place of safety, "a young slave girl named Gulnare has been waiting here to see you."

"And where is she now?" cried Assad, all excitement.

"She had to go, for she was expected at home, but she said you would meet her in half an hour after the evening prayers at the shop of Khorasan, the jeweller."

"Is that all she told you?"

"All, save that she asked of me that I would be secret."

"And thou wilt be secret, Marouf?"

"As death, my loved master."

"God keep thee, my friend, and give thee joy!" uttered Assad. "I know I may trust thee, and even now I tell thee, I may have need of thy assistance in a work I have in hand, and to show thee how fully I trust thee, I will tell thee my secret. Know, then, that Ali Shir, the Syndic of the merchants, has a slave girl named Morgiana, as beautiful as the evening star, as mild as the full moon, and as radiant as the sun. He means to marry her to his son Hassan, but the girl loves me with her whole soul, and she is as the apple of my eye to me—ay, as the very core of my soul."

"Then, by Allah, O my master, who shall take her from thee? Love is of God, and must be obeyed. I will help thee while my heart beats."

Assad thanked Marouf for his generous friendship, and then went away to the market of the money-changers. His master spoke somewhat severely to him on account of his tardiness, but the youth's mind was filled with thoughts of Morgiana, and he took little heed of the Syndic's severity of manner.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

TOUCHING INCIDENT.

A little girl, in a family of my acquaintance, a lovely and precious child, lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features in her remembrance. She was as frail as beautiful, and as the bud of heart unfolded, it seemed as if won by the mother's prayers to turn heavenward. The sweet, conscientious, prayer-loving child was the idol of the bereaved family. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who took a mother's care of her, and winding one wasted arm about her neck, would say: "Now tell me about my mama." And when the oft-told tale had been repeated, would softly ask: "Take me into the parlor, I want to see mama." The request was never refused, and the affectionate child would lie for hours, contentedly gazing on her mother's portrait. But

"Pale and wan she grew, and weakly—
Bearing all her pain so meekly,
That to them she still grew dearer,
As the trial hour grew nearer."

That hour came at last, and the weeping neighbors assembled to see the little one die. The dew of death was already on the flower, as its life-sun was going down. The little chest heaved faintly—spasmodically.

"Do you know me, darling?" sobbed close in her ear the voice that was dearest; but it awoke no answer.

All at once a brightness, as if from the upper world, burst over the child's colorless countenance. The eyelids flashed open, the lips parted, the wan, cudding hands flew up, in the little one's last impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly into the far above.

"Mother!" she cried, with surprise and transport in her tone—and passed with that breath into her mother's bosom.

Said a distinguished divine, who stood by that bed of death:

"If I had never believed in the ministration of departed ones before, I could not doubt it now."

"Peace I leave with you," said the wisest Spirit that ever passed from earth to heaven. Let us be at peace, amid the spirit mysteries and questionings on which his eye shall soon shed the light of eternity.—*National Era.*

A HIGHWAYMAN.

Not many years ago, an Irishman, whose finances did not keep pace with the demands made on his pocket, and whose scorn of honest labor was eminently unfavorable to their being legitimately filled, borrowed an old pistol one day, when poverty had driven him to extremity, and took the highway convenient, where he was likely to find a heavy purse.

A jolly old farmer came jogging along, and Pat put him down instantly as a party who possessed those requisites he so much stood in need of himself. Presenting his pistol, he demanded him "to stand and deliver."

The poor fellow forked over fifty dollars, but finding Pat somewhat of a greenhorn, begged a five to take him home, a distance of half a mile. The request was complied with, accompanied by the most patronizing air. Old Acres and Roods was a knowing one. Eyeing the pistol, he asked Pat if he would sell it.

"Is it to sell the pistol? Sowl, and it's that same thing I'll be afther doing! What will ye be afther giving for it?"

"I'll give you a five dollar bill for it."

"Done! and done's enough between two gentlemen. Down with the dust, and here's the tool for you."

The bargain was made by immediate transfer. The moment the farmer got the weapon, he ordered Pat to dismount, and threatened to blow his brains out if he refused.

Pat looked at him with a comical leer, and buttoning his breeches pockets, sung out—

"Blow away, ould boy! deuce take the bit o' powder's in it."

We believe the old fellow told the last part of the story but once, and that was by the purest accident.—*N. Y. Mercury.*

CHINESE INNS.

As it is customary to commence by drinking tea, and amusing yourself with little trifling dainties, the cooks—or to give them a stately and more appropriate appellation, "the mandarins of the kettle"—have time for their culinary operations. They bring in the dishes ordered in the most ostentatious manner, and when the waiters of the establishment put down the dishes before the guests, they sing out the name in a loud voice, so as to be heard by every one. This plan, as may be supposed, is very useful in exciting the vanity of the guests, and inducing them to ask for expensive things, that perhaps they would willingly have done without, had they dined in private. When the repast is finished, the head waiter of the hotel comes to the door, and commences a kind of song, of which the subject is the nomenclature of the dishes, and the burden the sum total of the expenses. When the guest goes out—and this, it must be owned, is a critical and solemn moment—those who have dined economically, depart with an humble and contrite air, and try to avoid the notice of the company, while the Chinese lords, who have eaten sumptuously, and of high priced viands, march out with their pipes in their mouths, and noses in the air, casting proud and disdainful glances on all around.—*Hue's Chinese Empire.*

FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

"How old are you?" said Major Garver to a dwarfish young man.

"Twenty."

"I wonder you aint right down ashamed of being no bigger; you look like a boy of ten."

"All comes of being a dutiful child."

"How so?"

"When I was ten, father put his hand on my head and said, 'Stop there!' and he then ran away. I've never seen him since, and didn't think it right in me to go on growing, without his leave!"

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

I'M ROAMING ALL ALONE.

BY MARIAN DESMOND.

O, when I'm roaming all alone,
I'm happier than when
I mingle in the many dance,
Or tread the haunts of men.

I love to gaze on other scenes,
The fair, bright, azure sky,
Upon whose peaceful bosom blue,
The white clouds wander by.

And the fair, bright golden flowers
Have each delights for me;
For in their tender leaves and buds
God's handiwork I see.

I love the music of the winds,
Whose notes are soft and low;
And when the notes more loud and rough,
The leafy branches bow.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

ZEPH. HOBKINS'S EXPERIENCE.

BY THE OLD 'UN.

When I was down to New Orleans—a makin' my etarnal fortin', who should turn up one day, of all creation, but Deacon Brittle's darter Sal, a critter I used to be kind o' sweet on in Varmount—but good gracious! along side of them are Creoles and French gals—wall, it's no use talking—caparisons are odorous—as Mrs. Malaprop says in the play. Of course, I wasn't over and above delighted to see her—didn't jump clean outer my buter—or ture my dickey—or do anythin' o' that sort—but seein's how I'd written the critter some pooty strong letters, when I was to hum and as verdant as a year old donkey, I put a pooty good face on the matter, and made b'leave I was dretfle glad to see her. The old deacon is pooty well to do, and in case nothin' breaks, thinks I—why Sal is a pooty nice gal, and, all things considered, I might go further and fare wuss. If I didn't go further and fare wuss—ma I be kicked to death by grasshoppers. But I'm gettin' ahead of my story. I shinned up again to Sal, and took her out to ride a few—treated her to ice creams *ak settery*, once in a while. But what on airth put it into my head to take the critter to a ball—'cept it was my ill luck—I never could diskiver.

To make a long story short, I took Sal to a rampin', tearin' two dollar ball. Fixin's elegant—Amerikin flags—bokays—the blackest kind 'er ginger fiddlers—chalked floors—*ak settery*. But five minnits arter I'd been thar, I didn't see no gaslights, no flowers, no chalk, no niggers, no Sal, no nothin', except one of the most splendifferous, angellific'rous, onaccountable, bewitchin' fascinoratin', female critters I ever sot my two gooseberry eyes onto.

I kitched holt of a floor manager and made him introduce me to her. Gee-whitteaker! what a hansum he made, and I bowed so low that I nearly fell outer my dickey onto the floor. We danced a good reel, and I was so delighted with the critter, I engaged her for the hull evenin'.

"Do you waltz, Mr. Hobkins?" said she.

"I don't do nothin' else," said I, as bold as brass, and with that I ketched holt on her, like I seen the other fellers doin' to their gals, an if I didn't sling her, then there's no snow on Killingty Peak. A few complimentary remarks, such as "go it boots!" from the bystanders, encouraged me to du my pootiest, and the way I slung them cowhides round was puffickly orful—I say it with a full and realizin' sense of the moral responsibility of the assershin. Oncet in a while I ketched site of Sal a settin' up aginst the wall in solitary glory, but it only made me cut up harder.

Bime-by I got kinder dizzy, and next thing I know'd I was settin on to a sofy and that 'ere angel a holtin' salts to my nose, and a bowlin' over me like a hen over a spavined chicken. I didn't see no more, nor think no more of Sal arter that. How she got hum, or when she got hum, I didn't inquire. I waited on my angel to her door, and when she telled me at partin', I might call on her, I went home chuck full of glory and happiness, and dreamed all nite the strangest kind of dreams, about my being in the Garden of Eden and playin' "High Low Jack," with General Washington and Mary Queen of Scots.

Next day, *perhaps* I didn't call on my charmer—wall, I reckon I did though. I bust rite out and called her all the angels in creation, and told her I loved her better than maple sugar and new cider.

"Will you do me a favor?" says she.

"Anything in reason or agin reason," says I.

"Well," says she, looking pooty enough to eat, "I want you to buy me a cowhide—here's a bit to pay for it."

"Darn the expense!" says I, "I'll make you a present of it."

Off I went, proud of the commission, and bought her a real stinger—cost me a shillin'—and took it to her, wonderin' who on airth she wanted to give a lickin' to. "I bet it," thought I, "some other fellow she don't like has been a perseutin' her, and now she's going to gin him the sack and a lickin' into the bargain."

So says I, as I handed her the cowhide: "Miss Evelina (that was her name), I should like to know the name of the individual that 'ere cowhide is *destined* to astonish."

"He's about your size," says she, with a peculiar smile that I didn't somehow exactly like. Then she telled me how Sal had been there and told her how shameful I'd treated her—and then—my stars! if she didn't use that cowhide powerful!

"Hold on!" says I, "it hurts!"

"Glad of it!" says she: "plenty more licks whar them cum's from!" and she pelted away on my head, and ears, and limbs, and arms, till the air seemed full of licks and cowhides. I hollered "enuff!" but twarn't no kind of use. Enuff to me was only just beginning to her. I bedn't bed such a lickin' sence I blowed up the old skule-house stove with father's powder horn, and got ketched just as it was techin' off the train. I rid hum in a kerridge—that cost me a dollar—and I kept my bed for a fortnight! I was a site to be seen! My hed swelled up bigger'n a yaller pumpkin. When I got well, I went to see Sal to explain matters and make it up with *her!* But she didn't keer to make my akwaintance. The ingratitude of wimmen is onaccountable! And thar was a feller with black whiskers setten' along side of her, who said somethin' about spittin' for a fite, which made me make tracks in double quick time. The story got into the newspapers, and darned if it didn't make New Orleans too hot to hold me. Sal, too, went and married the clark of a steamboat. So I cum north, but I haint called on no gals, and haint been to no balls sence, for cowhides grow in Boston just about as vigorous as they du in New Orleans, and a feller that's bed one such a lickin' as I bed, don't care about another, at no price whatsendever.

TOO MUCH BUSINESS.

This is a world of inflexible commerce; nothing is ever given away, but everything is bought and paid for. If, by exclusive and absolute surrender of ourselves to material pursuits, we monetize the mind, we lose the class of satisfactions of which the mind is the region and the resource. A young man in business, for instance, begins to feel the exhilarating glow of success, and deliberately determines to abandon himself to its delicious whirl. He says to himself, "I will think of nothing but business until I have made so much money, and then I will begin a new life. I will gather round me books, and pictures, and friends. I will have knowledge, taste and cultivation, the perfumes of scholarship, and winning speech and graceful manners. I will see foreign countries, and converse with accomplished men. I will drink deep of the fountain of classic lore. Philosophy shall guide me; history shall instruct me, and poetry shall charm me. Science shall open to me her wonders. I shall then remember my present life of drudgery as one recalls a pleasant dream when the morning has dawned." He keeps his self registered vow. He bends his thoughts downwards and nails them to the dust. Every power, every affection, every taste, except those which his particular occupation calls into play, is left to starve. Over the gates of his mind he writes, in letters which he who runs may read, "No admittance except on business."

In time he reaches the goal of his hopes; but now insulted nature begins to claim her revenge. That which was once unnatural is now natural to him. The enforced constraint has become a rigid deformity. The spring of his mind is broken. He can no longer lift his thoughts from the ground. Books and knowledge, and wise discourse, and the amenities of art, and the cordial of friendship, are like words in a strange tongue. To the hard, smooth surface of his soul nothing genial, graceful or winning will cling. He cannot even purge his voice of its fawning tone, or plack from his face the mean, money-getting mask which the child does not look at without pausing to smile. Amid the graces and ornaments of wealth, he is like a blind man in a picture-gallery. That which he has done he must continue to do; he must accumulate riches which he cannot enjoy, and contemplate the dreary prospect of growing old with nothing to make age venerable or attractive.—*Hillard.*

THE INDIAN AND THE STOLEN VENISON.

A North American Indian, upon returning home to his cabin, discovered that his venison, which had been hung up to dry, was stolen. After taking his observations on the spot, he set off in pursuit of the thief, whom he tracked through the woods.

Meeting with some persons on his route, he inquired if they had seen a little, old, white man, with a short gun, and accompanied by a small dog with a bob tail. They answered in the affirmative; and, upon the Indian assuring them that the man thus described had stolen his venison, they desired to be informed how he was able to give so minute a description of a person whom, it appeared, he had never seen.

The Indian replied, "The thief, I know, is a *little* man, by his having heaped up a pile of stones to stand upon in order to reach the venison from the height at which I hung it while standing on the ground; that he is an *old* man, I know by his short steps, which I have traced over the dead leaves in the woods; and that he is a *white* man, I know by his turning out his toes when he walks; which an Indian never does. His gun I know to be *short*, from the mark which the muzzle made by rubbing the bark of the tree against which it leaned; that his dog is *small*, I know by his track; and that he has a *bobtail*, I discovered by the track it made in the dust, where he was sitting while his master was about my meat."—*Christian Freeman.*

JAPANESE DRESSES.

The dress of a Japanese gentleman is described as consisting of large, loose silk trowsers, a loose under garment folded over the breast, and confined at the waist by a broad belt or band which also answers the purpose of a sword belt; a loose open robe which falls nearly to the knees, open in front and with large flowing sleeves, generally of black or dark colored crape. On the arms and back of it are embroidered in white the wearer's coat of arms. These marks of hereditary rank, birth, etc., are, even in Japan, considered of such importance, that books of heraldry are published in which all known distinctions are figured. Each gentleman wears two swords—one long, for the service of the emperor; the other, a short one, to commit suicide, when, by his acts, he incurs the displeasure of his sovereign. The swords are beautifully ornamented, having a high polish, and are of a temper unequalled. The sheath is of wood, beautifully lacquered. The dress of a Japanese lady consists of a single long, loose robe, folded over the breast, and an under petticoat quite short, both fastened round the waist by a band tied in a square knot behind. The hair is dressed very pretty and neat, and the bit of red crape with which it is tied, is the only ornament used. Neither of the sexes wear any ornaments. In this respect, therefore, they betray less of the barbarian's taste than many of the refined inhabitants of our Fifth Avenue.—*New York Express.*

BLUE BEARD.

The original Blue Beard was Giles de Laval, Lord of Raiz, who was made marshal of France in 1429, and in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII. distinguished himself by his courage against the English, when they invaded France. The services that he rendered his country might have immortalized his name, had he not forever blotted his glory by murders, impieties, and delinquencies. Mezeray says that he encouraged and maintained sorcerers to discover hidden treasures, and corrupted young persons of both sexes, that he might attach them to him, and afterwards killed them for the sake of their blood for charms and incantations. At length, for some state crimes against the Duke of Brittany, he was sentenced to be burned alive in a field at Nantes, in 1443. Holinshed notices another Blue Beard in the reign of Henry VI, in 1450. Speaking of the commitsal of the Duke of Suffolk to the Tower, he says: "His doing so much displeased the people, that if politike provision had not been made, great mischief had immediately ensued. For the Commons, in sundry places of the realm, assembled together in great quantities, and chose to them a captain, whom they called Blue Beard; but ere they had any enterprise, their leaders were apprehended.—*N. Y. Atlas.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE COQUETTE.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

A want of soul is made the boast
Of her whose heart is weak and hollow;
But who should win compassion most,
The followed fool, or fools that follow?

Why pity more the sighing train,
Whose yielding hearts are never broken,
Than her whose tameless passions vain
Are fed with praises falsely spoken.

Most dearly bought is all her fame,
And close 'twill cling when once o'er taken;
Until its ring of glaring flame
Shall leave her blackened, scathed, forsaken.

Her heart will all too late have learned
The bread wherein the fire awaketh,
A dust amid the blaze is turned,
And eaten by the flame it maketh.

If dupes and fools compassion share,
O should not she be doubly pitied,
Whose proudest triumphs bring despair,
Whose wits have e'en herself outwitted?

Fair maid, if in thy pleasant spring,
True, simple love to thee appealeth,
Thank Heaven—for 'tis a blessed thing,
Which not to all its sweets revealeth.

And live from false ambition free,
Nor seek that fame, howe'er it gloweth,
Which, unabridged, abridgeth thee,
And hides thy virtues as it groweth.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

AUNT BETSEY.

BY MRS. N. T. MUNROE.

A most curious specimen of the female part of creation was Aunt Betsey. Tall, gaunt, and busy, with a frame of iron, nerves of steel, and a heart of—what shall I call it?—not flesh certainly, unless it were the toughest kind. If it were possible for a person to live for years with such a disease as ossification of the heart, I should say that my aunt was that person, but if such is the case, it is the only disease she ever did have. Or perhaps, as Sydney Smith says of a woman he knew, "Nature had made one trifling omission—a heart."

It has been a much mooted question in my mind, whether Aunt Betsey could have united for love; certainly not, if she had no heart, or having one, it must have been much softer in her younger days than now, probably before ossification begun. I can solve the question no other way than this: that it was a mutual love brought about the marriage between Uncle Sol and Aunt Betsey, not a mutual love for each other, but a mutual love for money. He saw that she would make a smart, economical, working wife; she knew that he was a shrewd, close, calculating, money-making man. They were not deceived in each other. They began life economically, they always lived economically; no stone was left unturned, the turning of which would reveal the smallest portion of that so dear to both. They worked from morning till night, through winter's cold and summer's heat, for money. The best farmer in all the country round was Uncle Sol, and the smartest farmer's wife was Aunt Betsey. She sent the most butter to market of any woman in town, and she made the most cheese. She hired the best help of any farmer about, and people wondered how all the hay, and vegetables, and fruit got taken care of with so little assistance. But Aunt Betsey was in the field, she was Uncle Sol's right hand man. Yet she kept no help in the house, for how could any one help her who was all-powerful?

They had a large family of children, but they were made of use as soon as they could walk, and before that time, Aunt Betsey took good care that they should be no hindrance. If in the house, they must lie on the floor while she washed the dishes, cooked the dinner, or churned; and if out of doors, they must lie on the grass while she helped make hay or picked hops,—she could not waste time tending them, as some foolish mothers had done.

Strictly religious, in all the forms of the church, were Uncle Sol and Aunt Betsey. He was one of the head deacons of the church; she wore the most sanctimonious face that ever looked up to a minister of a Sunday. The children were brought up in the strictest observance of the day, and a laugh was never heard in that house from the rising of a Sabbath's sun to the going down of the same. A long day was it to them, with nothing to break its dullness and monotony. They had no picture-books to look over, no stories to listen to: straight and still they must sit in their chairs at home, and just as straight and still in their seats at church. If Tim sometimes pinched Sarah, or Joseph made up faces to Hannah, is it to be wondered at?

So for twenty years Uncle Sol and Aunt Betsey worked and toiled, and at the end of that time, they could show as the fruit of their toil, the very best farm in the whole town of B., clear of all incumbrances, to say nothing of large mortgages on other farms which my good uncle held, and which he well knew in due time must revert to him. Yet they worked and toiled the same as ever, they rested not from their labors. Every morning found my aunt at her churn, every day saw her going through the same routine of drudgery. Her form was thin and spare as ever, all bone and muscle, and her face bronzed by exposure and burned by cooking over the fire, her step firm and quick, her voice sharp and ringing; the sound of that step and voice always quickened the motion of all who heard them.

The children, had they belonged to any one else, would have been considered smart, but what were they, compared to their mother! Sarah was slow and indolent, her mind was never on her work, Joseph was always poring over his books, Hannah was heedless, and Tim, though smart enough, was up to all sorts of mischief.

Sarah was now nineteen, a very pretty, graceful and intelligent girl. She was, too, the daughter of one of the wealthiest farmers of B——, and as such, she had a good many admirers. True her mother was considered as not the most agreeable person in the world, and the young men were rather afraid of her; yet farmers' sons, well to do in the world, thronged around the young beauty, and Aunt Betsey condescended to smile upon them, but not so Sarah. She, foolish girl that she was, preferred the schoolmaster, a little, pale-faced, insignificant looking personage, poor as a church mouse, as Aunt Betsey expressed herself, scarcely able to support himself, much less a wife.

Sarah had more than once walked out with him of an evening, a proceeding which met not with her mother's approbation, and which she must put a stop to directly. So, one Monday morning when she and Sarah were at work in the kitchen, she chose for her time. Smarter than ever was Aunt Betsey that morning, faster flew her hands in the tub, and farther than usual the flecks of soap flew over the kitchen floor. At last, giving a desperate pull at a sheet she was wringing, she begun:

"Sarah, I wish you would not walk out any more with that schoolmaster. I don't know as he means anything by coming here so much, may be he don't, but whether he does or not, it is as well for you to give him a cold shoulder, for, as for thinking of having him for a beau, it is entirely out of the question."

The sheet was wrung out by this time, and went with a desperate splash into the boiler. Sarah said nothing. Aunt Betsey did not like the silence, so as she took hold of some other article of clothing, she began again:

"Now there's David Sanderson, why in the world you don't fancy him I can't see; a stout, handsome young fellow, is a first-rate farmer, and his father is rich besides."

Sarah turned up her pretty nose; Aunt Betsey saw the sign of contempt, and she stopped short in his praises.

"Let me tell you, Sarah Hartwell, you may look further and fare worse. David has spoken to your father."

Sarah dropped the dish she was wiping.

"Spoken to my father?"

"Yes, child, what is there so dreadful in that? You know very well that he was dying to wait upon you, only you always run away from him; you don't walk out with him as you do with some other young men, and if you see him coming, you always turn the other way." Aunt Betsey was growing angry, but she kept on washing faster than ever. "Let me tell you, once for all, Sarah, that you must alter your hand, give that pale-faced Bartlett a walking-ticket, and make up your mind to be agreeable to David; your father and I both command it."

Sarah heard and trembled, as her mother intended she should; but Aunt Betsey was a little too late, love had got the start of her, for the very evening before, Sarah had plighted her faith to John. But how could she tell her? She could not; so she wisely kept silent.

When the schoolmaster made his next visit, Aunt Betsey received him with a scowling face, and Uncle Sol was as cold as an iceberg. In vain he tried to make himself agreeable, it wouldn't do, he saw that, though Sarah might smile upon him, the old folks did not. However he was not discouraged; there was more perseverance and decision in that slight form than in David Sanderson's enormous, overgrown body.

For a while matters seemed to go more smoothly, the schoolmaster appeared to have given up all hopes of Sarah, and Aunt Betsey was satisfied. David came to the house regularly every evening, sat by the side of Sarah, said a few words occasionally to Uncle Sol about his farm and his crops, answered all Aunt Betsey's questions concerning his father and mother, cast what he meant to be loving glances towards Sarah, and thought, poor, simple fellow, that his suit was coming on wonderfully well. David was an only son, and moreover his father's farm adjoined Uncle Sol's; the old folks were far advanced in years, and infirm, in all probability, as Uncle Sol said, not long for this world, and it behooved young David to be looking round him for a wife. Having a comfortable opinion of himself, he had not a doubt, now that the schoolmaster had left the field, but he should win the prize.

But his backwardness about the business did not please Aunt Betsey. What use was it for him to come and sit there, night after night, and not open his mouth half a dozen times? "It is bashfulness," thought she, "I will just give him a little advice."

So one night when he came as usual and took his accustomed seat, he found Aunt Betsey sitting alone, knitting by the fire. Sarah and her father were out. Aunt Betsey, as she bade him good evening, went on knitting faster than ever; you might have known she had something to say by the way the needles flew, and at last she broke out:

"David," said she, "I've a word of advice for you. I know, and my husband knows, why you come here, night after night; it is for the sake of our daughter, Sarah, eh, David?"

David said "yes," he wouldn't deny but it was.

"Well, have you ever said anything to her about it?"

"No, he couldn't say he had, he spoke to her father, and he supposed he had told her."

"Well," said my aunt, decidedly, and knitting faster than ever, "a girl don't like to have these things done second hand, they like to be asked out right,—'Do you love me,' or, 'Will you have me?' Now, if you say none of these things to my daughter, when do you expect to get her for a wife? You must be more of a beau for her, just say some tender things to her, ask her to walk out with you, and not sit here so dumb, night after night, for though we understand your feelings, she will not."

Aunt Betsey stopped, she feared she might go too far, and for a while there was silence, saving the click of her knitting needles. As my aunt was economical, she was sitting without candles, and now she stopped, and gave a vigorous poke to the fire, which sent up a ruddy blaze, lighting up every corner, and among the rest, David's face. This was what my aunt wished, but she was not much wiser, the face was as unreadable as a book in an unknown tongue would have been. However, as what she saw gave her no clue to his feelings, she comforted herself with what she did not see, and as she did not see any anger in the fresh, ruddy, inexpressive face before her, she hoped that all was right, and went on with her knitting. She had not asked her usual questions this evening, so to break the awkward silence, she asked: "How is your mother, to night?"

"Middling well, marm,"—his invariable tone and words.

"And your father?"

"Tolerable, thank ye."

Another silence, which after a while was broken by David himself. A thought seemed to have struck him, which, judging from the effect it had upon him, must have been an event of rare occurrence. His face lighted up in the firelight: "Mrs. Hartwell, I will ask her to-night if she'll have me."

"Perhaps, David," said my aunt, "that will not be the wisest plan; be a little more attentive to her first, make her a few presents, take her out to ride a few times, that would be the best way. I know her, David, better than you do."

"Very well, marm," said he, "I will harness Dick into father's chaise, and carry her to ride to-morrow."

"Yes, but be sure and ask her to night if she will go with you, I see that you have a chance."

When Sarah and her father came home, my good aunt called her husband into the kitchen, on business of importance, which it took her some time to settle, and in the meantime David ventured to ask Sarah to go to ride with him the next day. Sarah had no excuse to give why she should not go, so, although she would have much preferred staying at home, she was obliged to say she would go.

The morrow saw Dick harnessed to "father's chaise," standing at Deacon Hartwell's door. David was dressed in his best, and in truth made a very respectable appearance. As he handed Sarah to the chaise, improving upon my good aunt's hints, he pressed her delicate hand. Aunt Betsey's tall, gaunt figure stood in the doorway, a smile of satisfaction lighted up her sun burnt face, and right behind her loomed up my uncle's bald head.

The young people rode away, and as they stood congratulating themselves, who should come along but young Bartlett the schoolmaster?

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Hartwell; good afternoon, sir," said he, spying my uncle in the distance, "a fine day, sir."

As the remark could not be gainsayed, they returned his salutation. The young man paused a moment, evidently he wished to be invited in; but there was no chance to force an entrance into the citadel, the enemy had met him at the very gates, there was nothing for him but a parley.

"I is Miss Sarah at home?" said he at last.

"She is not," said my aunt, sharply, "she has just rode off with young Sanderson."

"Ah," said he, "then I cannot see her?"

"Indeed you cannot."

The young man turned from my aunt; he saw nothing was to be gained there, he must direct his attack upon another quarter; so, turning to my uncle, he addressed him thus:

"I wish to speak to you, sir, upon a subject near to my heart. I love your daughter, I have reason to think she returns my affection. I know very well that you have not looked approvingly upon my attentions heretofore; but I judged it was because I was poor, having but a small salary, with no rich relations to assist me; but I have of late had an appointment to a school of higher standing, and of salary amply sufficient to warrant me in saying that I shall be fully able to support your daughter respectably, and that you be willing to make me so happy as to give me the privilege of calling her my wife. As I must leave the town soon, will you be so kind as to give me, if possible, a favorable answer?"

Uncle Sol was silent, his words always came slowly, and now he was utterly confounded by this grand speech, so different from the awkward way in which David Sanderson had asked for his daughter; the contrast was unfavorable to the latter. But my aunt's mind moved quicker, indeed it had been previously made up, and when so, it was as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But as she had not been addressed, she stood uneasily by her good man's side, setting her lips firmly together, lest the words on the end of her tongue should escape before their time. Losing all patience at last, she gave Uncle Sol a sharp nudge with her arm, and whispered, "why don't you answer him, Sol Hartwell?"

"Well, young man," began my uncle, "you have quite taken me by surprise. My daughter, sir,—my daughter is very young, not old enough to marry any one."

"I would wait, Mr. Hartwell, only give me permission to visit her, place me on an equal footing with others, give her permission to choose for herself."

"She is young and foolish, like other girls, and knows not what is best for her."

"You evade my question, Mr. Hartwell, you do not give me a decided answer."

"Mr. Bartlett," broke in my aunt, who could keep silent no longer, "we have already decided for our daughter. It is now some months since young David Sanderson proposed to her father for her hand."

"I was aware, madam, that he had done so, but I think the young lady is still free, at least," said he, a faint blush suffusing his cheek as he spoke, "at least as far as David Sanderson is concerned."

Aunt Betsey interrupted him. "The young lady," said she, in a sneering tone, "will, I fancy, obey the wishes of her parents."

"But," said the young man very quietly, wishing to allay the rising storm, "her parents surely do not wish her to marry against her inclinations."

"It's no use talking about the matter," said she, in her short, decisive tone, "you say you will leave the town soon; we are glad to hear it, as then we hope our daughter's obedience will not be interfered with." Aunt Betsey turning short round, walked away; she had "said her say," and no doubt felt relieved. But Uncle Sol still remained, and Mr. Bartlett turned to him.

"It is of no use, young man," said he, "her mother has said that she shall marry young Sanderson, and it is of no use for me to say anything against it."

"But she is not willing to marry him."

Uncle Sol shook his head.

"It is a very good match; many a girl would jump at the chance."

The young man's lips curled. "It is as I thought, money and lands before happiness and the heart's free choice."

"But the young man loves her."

"I doubt it not; but she does not love him."

"How know you that?"

"Because I have faith in her own words and in her promises." He turned and walked away, it was of no use to talk any longer. He had scarcely gone before Aunt Betsey came out.

"What did he mean by saying he had faith in her words and promises?"

"Why, I suppose the girl has told him that she loved him, and didn't love David."

"But promises, too."

"Yes, yes; perhaps she has promised to marry him, who knows?"

"Well, if she has; she quicker she breaks it the better, she shan't marry that little, snivelling schoolmaster."

"But he is to have a great salary."

"What of that, what's a salary? Let him whip one of his urchins that come to school to him, the parents will make a fuss about it, the master will be turned out of school, and where will be his fine salary then? He will be on our hands half the time, depend upon it, just as Squire Watson's fine son, who went to college, and now stays at home with his wife and children, unable to support them. I will have no such doings; let her marry David. I'm sure the girl must be blind not to see how superior he is to John Bartlett. Certainly he is much handsomer, and loves the very ground she treads upon."

"No doubt," thought my uncle, "and expects some time to get it."

In due time David and Sarah returned, but nothing was said to her concerning the schoolmaster's visit. When David came as usual the next night, he brought some little trinket, which he awkwardly presented to Sarah, and which highly delighted my aunt.

It was while matters were in this state that I made a visit to my good uncle's. Sarah, with whom I was on most intimate terms, soon let me into all her love secrets, telling me how she was engaged to John, but her mother was determined she should marry David, and what should she do? She had no doubt but she could easily win her father to her side, were it not for her mother.

I know there is an old proverb consigning match-makers and match-breakers into rather bad hands; however, I thought here was a case which required a little manœuvering of some kind, and I determined to see what could be done. I knew Uncle Sol's weak points, and I knew there was one thing beside money which he loved. Though he would like to have his daughter marry a rich man, it would please him much better to have her marry a great man. Now my aunt had no such weakness; greatness without near to my heart. I love your daughter, I have goodness in her estimation, but I verily believe she returns my affection. I know very well that you have not looked approvingly upon my attentions heretofore; but I judged it was because I was poor, having but a small salary, with no rich relations to assist me; but I have of late had an appointment to a school of higher standing, and of salary amply sufficient to warrant me in saying that I shall be fully able to support your daughter respectably, and that you be willing to make me so happy as to give me the privilege of calling her my wife. As I must leave the town soon, will you be so kind as to give me, if possible, a favorable answer?"

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Nothing more was said. I seated myself beside my aunt, the children got in, and we drove on to church.

We walked in in regular file, first my uncle, then my aunt, then myself, followed by the rest of the family, according to their ages.

My uncle marched on, never turning his head to the right or left; my aunt walked straight enough, to be sure, but her eyes always saw everything, and this morning she saw, what she never missed seeing, the publishing-box, for it was exactly at her left hand as she entered the door. Though I was behind her, I knew what she was looking at. I knew she was reading the notice of marriage between John Bartlett and Sarah Hartwell; I expected something dreadful, I don't know what—that she would faint, or scream, or tear down the box, or something desperate, but no, though I knew how every word must have seared her very eyeballs, though I almost heard them as it were drop upon her hard heart, she scarcely paused, did not change countenance otherwise than to press the lips more firmly together, and kept on after her husband. Straight as ever she marched up the aisle, turning neither to the right nor left, for she knew the eyes of all were upon her. I followed her as well as I could, trembling in every joint, yet I thought I heard a suppressed titter behind me, and I knew it came from my reckless cousin, Tim.

It may well be imagined I heard but little of the sermon. I was stealing furtive glances at Aunt Betsey's face and at David Sanderson's head, which rose an inch or two above every other in the pew but one in front of me.

"What can he think of it?" thought I, and I could hardly help smiling as I thought of his "round-eyed wonder" at the dread announcement. Then I thought of poor Uncle Sol sitting there, apparently listening to the sermon; but all the time I knew he was thinking how he should ward off the storm which must soon burst upon him, especially if it should be known that he was privy to the whole affair. Then I thought of poor Sarah, whom I had left sobbing on her bed.

When the services were ended, I took my seat beside my aunt in the carriage, and inadvertently sat upon the corner of her shawl; she pulled it from under me as if she expected it would be burnt. "Ah," thought I, "sits the wind in that quarter?" foolish that I was to think a hurricane knew any quarter. She never spoke all the way home, the children caught the infection, and we were all silent. When we reached home I ran up stairs to Sarah.

"Well, Fanny, what did she say?"

"She didn't say anything, Sarah."

"How did she act?"

"She walked straight into church as if nothing had happened."

"Did she say nothing coming home?"

"Not a word."

"Was David there?"

"Yes."

When we went down to dinner I wished to see what would come of it. All the family were seated around the table when I entered. My uncle said grace, my aunt helped the children and me, but did not speak, and I really wondered if she had been struck dumb.

The afternoon and evening passed, and still she had not spoken: she would not speak till Sunday was over. We parted for the night in silence. I wondered if she would be awake till the clock struck twelve, and if then the tongue would be unloosed; sound must be thy sleep then, good uncle, if the storm disturb thee not.

Monday morning came, and with it the storm. When I saw Uncle Sol I knew its first fury had been spent on him, but I soon came in for my share, indeed the blame of the whole affair was laid upon my shoulders; but still Sarah must suffer too: she had brought disgrace upon the family, and would bring down her parents' gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. In vain Sarah wept and entreated, her mother was obdurate; she said she would never forgive her, she might marry Bartlett, if she wished; indeed the thing had gone so far she must marry him or be the talk of the town; but she should not be married at home, her father should not give her a cent; as she had sown so should she reap.

Sarah had flattered herself, after the first burst of anger, her mother would relent, but she did not. She did not mention the subject of her marriage, but it was plain she did not intend she should be married at home.

One day a span of horses and a carriage drew up to Deacon Hartwell's door. Out jumped John Bartlett, and handed Sarah into the carriage. Uncle Sol, dressed in his best, gallantly held out his hand to me, and we drove off together. I caught a glimpse of Aunt Betsey through the parlor blinds as we drove away. We went to the minister's. Sarah was a pretty bride, John a handsome bridegroom. Uncle Sol kissed the bride, and I saw him slip a well-filled purse into her hand. She was not a penniless bride, Aunt Betsey was not all-powerful.

My prophecy concerning John Bartlett was falsified, he lived to be a great and good man, and Uncle Sol was proud of him; but Aunt Betsey, though she got over the first bitter feelings, never wholly forgave him. True, when she found he was rich, and people thought a good deal of him, and when they came to see her in their own carriage, and Sarah had a house of her own, and servants to do her bidding, her pride was gratified; but her heart was cold to them still.

Years have passed, but Aunt Betsey is unchanged; she is still hard at work, and she will work as long as the breath remains in her body. I called there with some friends a short time since, Aunt Betsey was washing. Uncle Sol waited upon us into the parlor, she came in too, sat a few minutes, evidently ill at ease, then suddenly disappeared, and I could hear her at her work in the kitchen. After a while, as we still tarried, she appeared again, sat a while as before, said a few words, but her heart was evidently not with us, she soon vanished again and again. I heard her quick, steady scrubbing, which I knew so well of old. She could not spare time to wait upon the visitors, they were a hindrance and annoyance to her.

Such is Aunt Betsey, and such she will remain till those busy hands cease from their earthly labors, and the heart, so sparingly endowed with human affection, ceases its beatings.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE LOST AT SEA.

BY IMOGEN AFTON.

Outward bound, with a hopeful heart,
I saw a young sailor from home depart;
The future glowing fair and bright,
Mingling with the shades of night;
And that he bade his friends adieu,
To breast the waves of the ocean blue.

And swiftly borne from his native shore,
That he was doomed to see no more:
Ah, little he thought, as he onward sped,
That soon he must lie with the silent dead;
And find a grave in the mighty deep,
Aloha to lie in death's dreamless sleep.

But there came a night o'er that fragile bark,
When the wild winds howled, and the sky grew dark,
And she was borne 'neath the whirling wave—
Then sank with her the true and brave,
To sleep in the caverns of the deep.
And o'er his fate we are left to weep.

And thus he died—no bell there tolled,
But the ocean moaned, as it onward rolled,
A requiem o'er the sailor's grave;
And oft we have wept for the true and brave,
That sire from his kindred alone must sleep,
Till summoned on high from the mighty deep.

But why do we mourn the frail body that dies?
That beneath the ocean sun being lies?
The spirit hath soared to its home on high,
To dwell with God beyond the sky,
And sing glad songs forever more,
With angels on the immortal shore.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

MABEL FLORENCE.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK.

In one of the private apartments of the Astor House, sat Mabel Florence. She was now an orphan, and the only relative with whom she was acquainted, was her own brother William. She was eighteen years of age, and as beautiful as the evening star. Her dark golden hair fell in glossy, curling clusters about her neck and temples, and her eyes, which seemed almost too dark for her hair, were deep and lustrous, with a sparkle which betrayed a quick, energetic mind. Her features were faultlessly regular, and her form was naturally full and erect. But Mabel Florence was now pale and sad, and her form was wasted. She had not been in possession of perfect health for some months. She held an open letter in her hand, which she had just been reading. It was from her brother, and ran as follows:

"My own dear Sister: You will forgive me, if I do not write much at the present time. I have seen Mr. Winslow, and he is very anxious that you should come and take charge of his children. He will pay you a good salary, and will treat you, in every respect, as a member of his family. You can take the boat to-morrow morning, and he will be at the landing in Troy for you. I hope you will be anxious to please him, and also to make yourself pleasing to all. I have secured a berth as supercargo on board one of the ships our father used to own, and shall sail for the East Indies this very day.

"And now, Mabel, let us forget the severe blow which has fallen upon us, and give our hearts to God. I am resolved that no man shall ever hear a complaint from my lips. My own energies shall lift me up again, and I know that you have as much energy of character as I have. O, find peace and joy, if you can. Look never again upon the past only for lessons of experience, but remember that life lies in the future. God bless and protect you ever. Write me often, and I will do the same. Courage, Mabel, and pray.

"Your brother, truly, WILLIAM."

This letter Mabel had read twice.

"O!" she groaned, starting to her feet, "and has it come to this? Mabel Florence a governess!"

The very thought seemed overpowering, and she sat down and wept aloud. It was, indeed, a fall for her. Among the gay of the metropolis, she had been the gayest; among the rich, the richest; and among the proud, the proudest. Beaux had been at her feet, and fivored maidens had envied her; and even duels had been projected on her account. And now she had the offer of a place of governess over a family of children in Troy! At first, she had thought only of rejecting the place with scorn; but a few calmer thoughts brought a different result. Her mother had been dead several years, and her father had passed away only about six months previous to the present time. She had thought her father wealthy, but when his affairs came to be settled up, she saw, by the result which was presented to her, that both she and her brother were penniless. So she must either accept the proffered place, or beg, or starve. She resolved to go to Troy, but the resolution came with many bitter tears.

Closely veiled, Mabel Florence stepped into the coach, and was conveyed to the steamboat landing, and shortly after her trunk had been put on board she was on her way up the noble Hudson. She kept her state room all day long, for she feared there were people on board whom she knew, and she dared not see them. It was nearly dark when she reached Troy, and she found Mr. Winslow waiting for her. His greeting was kind, in the extreme, but it could not make her happy. That man had once been one of her father's customers, and now she was going to be a servant in his family! The very thought that dwelt uppermost in her mind.

Nathan Winslow was about forty years of age, and was a merchant in Troy. He had formerly bought goods of Mr. Florence, and had been among that gentleman's warmest friends, so that when the old merchant was taken away, he was among the first to offer his services to the orphans, and had, at the request of William, made a place for Mabel in his family. Mrs. Winslow was an excellent woman—one who had been schooled in the rough ways of life, and who had helped her husband up to his present position. They had only four children. Lucy was fourteen; Mary, eleven; Fanny, seven; and the youngest, which was a boy, was only two. It was the three girls Mabel was to take charge of, but she rested a few days ere she commenced her labors. She found Mr. Winslow's dwelling to be plain and simple in finish and furnishing, though everything that real comfort could ask was there. She was to receive four dollars per week, and her board, and in consideration thereof, she was to devote six hours per day to teaching the children, and also to give Lucy such music-lessons in the evening as might be convenient and agreeable.

After this bargain was made, Mabel went away to her little chamber and cried for an hour. To think that she had been hired, for so much per week, to work for another, was painful, and, in her eyes then, degrading. But she could not escape from it. Her head ached, and she threw herself upon her bed, and there she went to sleep. Four days passed away, before she commenced her duties as governess. She had by this time learned that her mistress (*mistress!* O, how that word galled her!) was a kind and affectionate woman, and she could not but feel grateful for the favors that were bestowed upon her. Only the thought that she was a dependent embittered every other feeling. Mabel commenced the task, but her head often pained her when she did her own it, and she was weak and faint when she professed to be strong. But Mrs. Winslow could see, and she made the governess take another week of respite. By that time, Mabel was in reality stronger and better, and she now commenced her work in earnest.

For a while, things moved on coldly and formally. Mabel treated the children *politely*, but not affectionately. Mrs. Winslow sat one evening, and talked with her husband on the subject, and on the next morning, she called Lucy into her room and had a long talk with her. Lucy was a pretty girl, and very intelligent; and, added to this, she possessed a sweet and loving disposition. And so did the other two children; but only Lucy was yet old enough to reason with on the subject of winning their teacher's love.

From that time, Lucy's peculiar mildness and sweetness of manner won gradually upon the governess, until, at the end of two weeks, love began to manifest itself in the study-room. Mabel had been gaining health and strength, and with ease of body came ease of mind. She now kissed her little scholars, and when she saw how delighted and happy they were with her caresses, she felt a new bond of union with them.

The summer passed slowly on, and the rose came back to Mabel's cheek. The unsteady, riotous life she had led in the city, had almost broken her down, but she had at length regained her lost health. The regular hours she now kept, restored repose and quiet to the frame which had suffered from the nightly debauches of the great Babel; and the simple, nutritious food which she found at Mr. Winslow's table, restored purity and vigor to her blood and whole system. When the cool winds of autumn came, Mabel Florence was a new being. Her fulness of frame, the elasticity of step, the rosy flush of cheek, and the deep, warm light of the full, dark eyes, all told that she was strong and healthy.

But her body was not alone in the blessing. Her mind was as new as that. First, the gentle love of the innocent children had won her soul away from its gloomy thoughts, and when once the light of true affection found its way to her heart, the whole flood was not long in pouring in upon her. She now sang as blithely as ever, and in the evening, when her merry laugh rung through the house, the good people almost fancied they had given home to one of the fairy spirits that carry sunshine around to distribute in dark places.

"Well, Mabel," said Mr. Winslow, as he came in, one evening—it was after the snow had come—"we are to have a visitor to-morrow."

"Ah! And who may it be?"

"Mr. John Lambreth."

Mabel's countenance fell in a moment. This was a man to whom she had been affianced about a year and a half before. She thought she loved him then, but she thought so no more.

"Don't the news please you?" inquired the merchant.

"Ah, no," quickly replied Mabel. "I wish he wouldn't come."

"Why, I thought he was your affianced husband?"

"So he was, but—but—that was a year and a half ago. I was different, then. Then, I only looked upon the outward show and glitter of life. I fancied I was happy amid the wickedness and sin of those who flattered me. Mr. Lambreth then pleased me, and I promised to be his wife; and I remember how angry I was with my brother because he objected to the match. Lambreth was rich, and my father favored him. But, O, I could not love him now!"

"But John Lambreth is not rich, now," said Mr. Winslow. "A year of dissipation in Europe has altered his circumstances, somewhat—or, at least, so a friend writes me. The young man has not probably heard of your misfortune, and may be coming up to draw upon the purse which he thinks you now hold."

"Do you think so?" asked Mabel, starting with sudden hope.

"Wait and see."

Yet Mabel was not wholly happy. She had once pledged her word that she would be Lambreth's wife, and she feared he would now hold her to her promise. And again she looked into her own heart, and she fairly shuddered when she reflected upon the fatal life she was so thoughtlessly leading, a year before. And she knew, too, that she could never be happy with a man of Lambreth's character.

But the morrow came, and with it Mr. John Lambreth. He was a young man, not more than six and-twenty, and was dressed in the very height of fashion. He was not a bad looking man, by any means, only so far as the marks of dissipation were concerned, and they were not to be disguised or mistaken. He greeted Mabel most lovingly, and his protestations of love and delight upon "once meah bweholding the object of his affections," were without bounds. After dinner, he gained an opportunity to speak a few moments with Mabel alone. He had already told of the wondrous things he had seen in "Euwope," and he was now prepared for business.

"Mabel," he commenced, "what the deuce made yo wun away from the city?"

"I came up here on business."

"You on bwisiness? Ha, ha, ha. But you must make a capital hand. Up to see about yer father's pwoperty, eh? What a dem foine time you must have had."

"You mistake, sir," returned Mabel, calmly. "My father left no property. After he was gone, I found myself absolutely penniless, and I came up here to accept the place of governess in Mr. Winslow's family."

"Eh! Aw, confounded rich joke. Ha, ha, ha." But you must make a capital hand. Up to see about yer father's pwoperty, eh? What a dem foine time you must have had."

"It's no joke, sir, I assure you. Did not my friends in New York inform you of this?"

"No. I didn't see 'em. I only found out where ye was. But d'ye mean that ye're done up—cleaned out—not a red—eh?"

"Really, sir, your terms are rather mystical. But I can simply assure you that I am now actually obliged to teach these children here, to find myself in food and clothing."

For some moments Mr. Lambreth moved uneasily in his seat. Then he looked at his watch, and started up.

"Six o'clock!" he cried. "By the mass, I promised to meet a man at six. Excuse me a moment."

And with this, Mr. John Lambreth left, and Mabel never saw him again; but on the following day, she received a note, which read after this fashion:

"Miss Mabel Florence: Perhaps you may have thought that we were bound, by former vows, to be married; but you must be aware how circumstances can alter cases. In fact, you are not the female to whom I promised my hand. She was an heiress—you are only a governess. Of course, you are henceforth free to bestow your hand where you choose.

"John Lambreth."

A cloud rested, for a moment, upon Mabel's face, but soon a smile drove it away, and finally, as she threw the note into the fire, a loud, merry laugh broke from her lips. She was astonished at herself. The reference to her pecuniary misfortune affected her not at all. She looked back upon the past, and in her soul she vowed that the misfortune was a blessing in disguise, for not for all the wealth of the great city would she exchange the health and quiet content she now enjoyed.

In a little while, a new visitor came. It was Mr. Winslow's youngest brother, a young man only four-and-twenty years of age, and who had just graduated from the medical school, having left college at the age of twenty-two. He came to spend a few weeks at his brother's, previous to commencing practice. Of course, it was natural that he should seek Mabel's company, seeing that she was the only one in the family near his own age; and when he found how richly the maiden's mind was stored, he made himself very familiar—in fact, dangerously so, for he seemed uneasy now only when Mabel was near him.

And how was it with her? Edwin Winslow was not only one of the handsomest young men of his time, but he was noble looking, too. None of your effeminate, dandified fellows, but a man of sound, practical common sense; and one, moreover, who never spoke a foolish thing in his life until he became acquainted with the governess of his brother's children. He was a *man*, too—tall, stout, erect and full, of energy and noble emulation. In truth, Mabel wondered what she should do evenings, when Edwin had gone—and the thought was unpleasant.

At length, the two young people became suddenly timid, and seemed afraid to speak to each other. Instead of sitting down upon the sofa and taking their books, they selected opposite sides of the room, and from these strange positions, they cast quick, tremulous, furtive glances at each other.

This state of things lasted a week, and at the end of that time, Mabel had become unhappy, and Edwin resolved 'twouldn't do. So that very evening, he sought Mabel's side, while they were alone in the sitting-room.

"Mabel," said he, very plainly, but yet tremblingly, "you will pardon me, if I speak to you bluntly, and to the point, for no good can ever come of hiding truth. Do you think you can ever love me well enough to be my wife?"

Surely, that was blunt and plain. But Mabel was not to be outdone, for she replied:

"Yes, Edwin, I can love you well enough."

"Then you will be mine!"

"Ah, that is a different question. You do not want a wife now."

But Edwin didn't believe that. He *did* want a wife, right off. Mabel asked him how long he had thought so, and he told her ever since he had known her. However, she finally referred him to his brother.

"Ask him first," she said. "I am but a poor, penniless dependent upon him, and cannot promise you my hand, without his consent. My heart is yours."

"But what has Nathan to do with me or mine?" cried Edwin.

"He has much to do with me!" Mabel answered. "He took me here, and gave me a home, and I cannot become your wife without—"

The remark was cut short by the entrance of the elder brother, and Edwin at once said:

"Well, we'll have it settled now, at all events."

"What is it?" asked Nathan.

"Why, I have asked Mabel, here, to become—" Here Mabel left the room, as though something had frightened her. "The gipsey! But I'll tell you, Nathan: I asked her if she loved me well enough to become my wife, and she told me yes. But she says she wont marry me, without your full consent. How's that?"

A cloud came over the elder brother's brow in a moment, but he tried to hide it.

"Wait—wait, Edwin, until you know what to do with a wife. When you get settled in practice will be time enough to think of that."

"Pooh! I'm settled enough, now. I can have practice right here in Troy, or in Albany."

A few moments of silence ensued, and then Nathan said: "Let this matter rest until Miss Florence's brother returns. If you have the least regard for my honor, speak not on the subject again to Mabel until you can first see her brother."

The next morning, Mr. Winslow took Mabel aside, and asked her if she would promise not to allow Edwin to speak with her upon the subject of marriage until her brother returned. She gave the promise readily.

But they did not have to wait so long as might have been expected, for within a week of that time, Mr. William Florence himself walked into the house. With a low cry of joy, Mabel sprung forward and fell upon his bosom. He held her off, and could scarcely believe his eyes.

"So rosy—so healthy—so lovely—so happy!" he uttered. "O, is it—is it, my own Mabel!"

"It is," cried the happy sister. "But not the same Mabel you left."

That evening was a joyous one; but Edwin was uneasy, and he could not sleep until he had spoken privately with William. So, after the rest had all retired, he took Mr. Florence by the hand, and told his love for Mabel.

"But," said William, "you may find a wealthier—"

"Stop!" cried Edwin. "If you have objections to make, make them against me. Mabel is all I want for a wife, and if I cannot, with my health and education, and by the energies God has given me, support my home, then let me die at once."

"I will speak with my sister, sir," replied William, with a moistened eye.

"And you will not refuse her request?"

"Of course not."

So Edwin Winslow went to bed very happy, and as he passed his brother's door, he could not help snapping his finger at it.

In the morning, William saw his sister alone, and he soon found that she loved Edwin as truly and fondly as he loved her.

"But," said her brother, "you must remember that, as a physician's wife, you will have many duties to perform."

"And have I not had duties to perform for the last nine or ten months?"

"But do you not sometimes hope that some fortunate marriage will place you back amid the glitter and amusement of your old city life?"

Mabel started to her feet. A strange flush overspread her features, and her dark eye burned.

"My brother," she said, slowly, and with thrilling power, "do you think I have found the spring of true life only to cast it from me again? I have worked here, and my work has been a source of such joys as I never before knew. Health, peace, joy and virtue are secured to me here. William, ere I would go back to the city, and live the life I lived there two years ago, I would calmly lie me down and die!"

William Florence caught his sister to his bosom in deep feeling. "Mabel," he said, "did I not see that you were dying by inches in that great Babel? That false pride held you aloof from gentle persuasions, and designing sycophants held you in their power? I saw but one way to save you, and that I determined to adopt. But I resolved to bear all that you bore. If you have been a simple governess, for nine months, I have imposed upon myself a task equally arduous, and during all that time, I have not used a penny that I did not earn. And now I know you will forgive me. Mabel, our father left us a fortune of eight hundred thousand dollars!"

"William—"

"I speak truly. He left that sum of money in safe, solid funds, and it is now ready for us at any moment. I forged those papers I showed you, and our banker helped me. You know, now, why I did it."

The astounded girl could not speak in words. She flung her arms about her brother's neck, and wept a long, long while.

At length, she became calm, and then William explained more fully. He told her how long he had pondered upon the plan, before he dared adopt it—how he made sure of Mr. Winslow's help, by explaining all to him—and how it pained him to leave his sister as he did.

"But I dared not see you on that day when I sent the letter," he said, "for I feared your tears would unman me."

"And Mr. Winslow knew all?" Mabel said.

"Yes. I had to tell him, of course."

So Mabel now knew why her employer had been so earnest in his objections to his brother's proposal. But all was bright, now.

Nathan Winslow was informed by William that Mabel's salary might now cease, and shortly afterwards, Edwin was informed that he might go up and see the governess, and make any proposal to her he pleased. He leaped up two steps at a time, and in a moment more, he was by Mabel's side.

"But suppose I was worth four hundred thousand dollars," said she, looking up with a merry twinkle.

Edwin laughed. "I never hope to reach that figure," he said; "but you shall have a comfortable home, and you shall have a faithful, loving heart to beat in unison with your own."

But finally Mabel made him understand that she was really worth four hundred thousand dollars, and the knowledge made him look sad.

"Can you love me, now?" she asked.

"I wont be a fool," he uttered, energetically, "by being the first to show a shade of doubt of the love of one like you. But you are not the governess, now, and I'll propose anew to the heiress. Will you take a poor but honest, loving man, like me, for your husband?"

"Yes. There's my hand, and it's your's forever."

And so the young doctor found wealth sooner than he had expected; but, truly, he thought little of the dollars, when compared with the sweet, gentle wife who brought them. And Mabel, though this last life-lesson was a joyful one, could not but look upon that other lesson which her brother had given her as the very foundation of life itself.

A RARE CHANCE!

WHO WILL WIN THESE PRIZES?

Being resolved to keep THE FLAG OF OUR UNION where it has ever been for the last *ten years*, in the van of literary weekly newspapers, not only in point of circulation, but in real intrinsic excellence, the proprietor has resolved to offer the following inducement to post-masters, and other energetic individuals, of either sex, to send us clubs for the year commencing January, 1856.

TEN ELEGANT AND RICH PRIZES

are offered in good faith, and shall be awarded with strict honesty and impartiality. The intrinsic value of these prizes is over

Eight Hundred and Fifty Dollars,

so arranged as to be divided among the persons who shall forward to us the ten largest clubs for THE FLAG OF OUR UNION between the 1st of December, 1855, and the 1st day of February, 1856, being a period of about sixty days. The field is open to all, the prizes are elegant and attractive.

THE FLAG OF OUR UNION

IS AN ELEGANT, MORAL AND REFINED

Miscellaneous Family Journal.

It is now the most popular literary weekly paper in America, a reputation which it has enjoyed for *ten years*! circulating at the present time more than any other miscellaneous weekly journal in the country, with the exception of *Ballou's Pictorial*.

It is devoted to polite literature, and it embraces

NEWS, TALES, POEMS, SKETCHES, MISCELLANY, ADVENTURES, BIOGRAPHIES, WIT AND HUMOR, AND NOVELLETTES,

written expressly for the paper by the best and most popular writers of the country. It is also spiced with a record of the notable events of the time, of peace and war, of discoveries and improvements occurring in either hemisphere, forming an intelligent and instructive companion. In politics, and on all sectarian questions, it is strictly neutral; therefore making it emphatically

A PAPER FOR THE MILLION,

and a welcome visitor to the home circle. It contains the foreign and domestic news of the day, so condensed as to present the greatest possible amount of intelligence. No advertisements are admitted to the paper, thus offering the entire sheet, which is of

THE MAMMOTH SIZE,

for the instruction and amusement of the general reader. An unrivalled corps of contributors are regularly engaged, and every department is under the most finished and perfect system that experience can suggest, forming an

ORIGINAL PAPER.

The FLAG is printed on fine white paper, with new, clear and beautiful type, and contains 1280 square inches, being a large weekly paper of eight super royal quarto pages.

We have commenced the new volume of The Flag of our Union (Volume XI.) with a brilliant and admirably written original novellette by that young and popular author, HORACE B. STANFORD. Mr. Stanford has just returned, after five years residence in the Orient, and this exceedingly interesting story is the result of his experience in the land of the Caliphs. It is entitled:

BEN HAMED:
—OR,—
THE CHILDREN OF FATE.
A TALE OF THE EASTERN WORLD.

We predict for this story the most favorable reception yet accorded to the numerous list of original novellettes which we are constantly publishing in the Flag. With all the dreamy mystery of the East, it has also the exciting plot, and strong delineations of love and passion, that remarkable fatality produces in every clime. We shall introduce in the coming volume of our paper the productions of many new sterling writers, and make such improvements otherwise as shall enhance the value of this widely circulated and favorite weekly.

THE PRIZES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

To the person who shall send us the *first* largest club, we will present a beautiful new SILVER TEA SET. Ten urn, cream pitcher, sugar bowl, slop dish and silver salver, being five pieces of sterling silver, manufactured for us by Jones, Shreve & Brown, Boston. Value..... $250

To the person who sends us the *second* largest club, we will present a large fine Rosewood PIANO, elegantly cased, and suitable for a church or parlor ornament, warranted perfect in all respects. Value..... 175

To the person who shall send us the *third* largest club, we will present an elegant English GOLD LEVER WATCH, chronometer and compensation balance, and extra *jewels*, new and warranted a perfect watch in all respects, and of the best workmanship. Value..... 120

To the person who shall send us the *fourth* largest club, we will present a superb English SILVER LEVER WATCH, same movement as above, new, heavy cased, and perfect in all respects, and warranted as to time and workmanship. Value..... 90

To the person who shall send us the *fifth* largest club, we will present a valuable library of SIXTY BOUND VOLUMES, all new and standard works, embracing biographies, histories, travels, etc., such as should ornament any home circle. Value..... 75

To the person who shall send us the *sixth* largest club, we will present an elegant, brass-bound, portable black walnut WRITING DESK, of the most exquisite workmanship, manufactured to our own order, with secret drawers, etc., by O. S. Tallman, 112 Washington Street, Boston, and furnished with every usual article. Value..... 50

To the person who shall send us the *seventh* largest club, we will present an elegantly wrought SILK PURSE, suitable for either gentleman or lady, and containing in GOLD DOLLARS, twenty-five dollars. Value..... 30

To the person who shall send us the *eighth* largest club, we will present a SILVER ENGLISH WATCH, a new and perfect timekeeper, and in all respects suitable for a young lad or miss attending school. Warranted. Value..... 25

To the person who sends us the *ninth* largest club, we will present four elegant large STEEL ENGRAVINGS, framed in gilt, representing the seasons—Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter,—elegant parlor ornaments. Value..... 20

To the person who sends us the *tenth* largest club, we will present a FINE GOLD PENCIL CASE AND PEN HOLDER, with gold pen, of a new pattern; an exceedingly beautiful and useful pocket companion. Value..... 18

Every prize is new and perfect in all respects, and may be seen at any hour by calling at our publication office.

TERMS:—INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

1 subscriber, one year..... $2 00
4 subscribers, do. " 7 00
10 " " " 15 00

Any person sending us *sixteen subscribers*, at the last rate, shall receive the seventeenth copy gratis, so that all are sure of remuneration who exert themselves.

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Any person sending us *fifty subscribers* shall receive the eight volumes complete of our "Pictorial," elegantly and uniformly bound in full gilt, with illustrated title-pages and indexes, containing nearly *two thousand* fine illustrations, the price of which is sixteen dollars.

It is very important that the names, accompanied by the money, should be sent to us as fast as they are obtained, that we may be able to print an ample number of papers to meet the demand. Therefore, as soon as ten subscribers are obtained, the person who has procured the club can forward them with the money, and he or she can then add to the club any number of names as the same rate, and the number will be duly credited to the account of the party who sends the subscribers, until the time specified shall expire, that is, up to Feb. 1st, 1856.

It is not indispensable that the entire club should be taken in one town; we will send the papers to any neighboring post-office to that where the club is gotten up, but all subscriptions must come through the same agent, in order to be counted to his or her credit. The offer does not apply to any regular wholesale agent of our papers—the clubs must be bona-fide, and each name be sent with its money.

The result will be duly published, and indisputable evidence of the receipt of each prize by the successful parties, will be given.

Sample copies of the paper furnished gratis by

M. M. BALLOU, *Publisher and Proprietor*,
Corner Tremont & Bromfield Sts., Boston, Mass.

☞ In writing letters, please be careful to write name of post-office and State plainly as possible, as post-marks are often illegible. Also write individuals' names distinctly.

THE FLAG OF OUR UNION

MATURIN M. BALLOU,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

☞ Terms of the FLAG OF OUR UNION, $2.00 per annum, invariably in advance, being discontinued at the expiration of the time paid for. See imprint on last page.

SHARPSHOOTERS.

The employment of *tirailleurs*—sharp-shooters—in front of the columns and troops of the line in battle, was first made by the French, in Europe, in the wars resulting from their revolution; but they unquestionably borrowed the idea from our practice—pretty sharp practice, too—in our revolutionary war. With their military genius they could not help raising this arm to an important position, and their sharp-shooters are now almost as formidable as their artillery in the open field. They have brought their drill to perfection, and we learn that our cadets are now instructed in it at West Point, and that some of the companies of our volunteer militia are practising the admirable tactics of the Chasseurs of Vincennes and the Zouaves. The most picturesque description of the operation of these troops that we have yet seen, is contained in a letter of a Russian aid-de-camp, who was in the battle of Alma, published in the Berlin (German) Gazette, and we have translated it expressly for the Flag. The writer says:

"When we looked on the enemy's troops which were to attack us on our right wing, and below us, we saw confused gray and green masses suddenly appear before us, trailing themselves along the ground. From the heart of these masses an object rose from time to time, a flash appeared instantly, and almost always one of our mounted officers fell. We thought it impossible to take aim at such a great distance; but we were obliged to leave the spot.

"Several battalion volleys were directed against these bold tirailleurs, but without effect. The tirailleurs came nearer by degrees, climbing their way. A field battery was ordered to give them a few rounds of grape; but this battery was hardly within range, when the movements of these masses was seen to be redoubled, and they delivered so destructive a fire on the artillerists who served the batteries, that we were obliged to send them infantry as quickly as possible to bring off the pieces.

"It remained then only to attempt to dislodge these serpents by cavalry, and the Cossacks were sent against them. These wild horsemen dashed towards the tirailleurs with a tremendous hurrah, their pikes in rest, convinced that the fleetness of their horses would enable them to surprise the enemy. But what was their astonishment when they saw men and horses fall long before they reached their adversaries. When the rashest had reached the spot where the tirailleurs lay, the latter rose lightly, and with the rapidity of lightning formed little groups of three men, back to back. Parrying the lance-thrusts adroitly with their bayonets, they at the same time aimed their blows at the horses, and produced such confusion among the Cossacks that, harassed right and left, pierced with balls and bayonets, they were finally obliged to wheel about and retreat, after losing half their number. Almost at the same moment, soldiers, who seemed to be Turks, appeared, climbing the steep rocks of the sea-side, on our left, and almost in our rear. Our four battalions received them with derision and laughter. 'Let some more of them come on, and we'll throw them all into the sea,' said our commandant.

"About two hundred and fifty of the pretended Turks had collected, when two battalions went at them with the bayonet. These new enemies also formed themselves into little groups, rushed upon our battalions, not with the cry of *Allah!* but *Long live France!* and established themselves in our midst with such tenacity that our fellows declared that they were devils, against whom there was no use fighting. Two other Russian battalions advanced, but they were also repulsed, and no command, not even grape, would have induced those of our troops who had fought with the Zouaves—for the pretended Turks were nothing else—to renew this struggle with demons."

PLOUGHING BY STEAM.

We have no doubt that before many years, very few lumbering two yoke teams of oxen will be used in breaking up greensward, but that steam power will be substituted for animal power. Mr. Obed Hussy, the inventor of the first reaping and mowing machine, has constructed a steam ploughing machine, which was successfully tried at the last fair of the Maryland Agricultural Society. The Baltimore Commercial Advertiser says "the work was well done, and it was the opinion of many farmers present, that it was admirably adapted to the breaking up of prairie land."

SOMETHING ELSE.—A regiment of Zouaves, in one of the Crimean encounters, had been ordered to give no quarter. A Russian officer having brought his life, was answered by a Zouave: "Ask anything else in reason, and I will grant it; but I can't spare your life."

PROFITS OF ACTING.—Mademoiselle Rachel deposited in bank $45,000, as the result of two months' acting in this country. Perhaps old Jules Janin, if he saw the "pile," would acknowledge the fact of her success.

A FEMALE REPORTER.—Mrs. Clarinda Chapman has been admitted within the precincts of the Kansas Legislature as a reporter to her husband's paper. "Tell Chapman to crow!"

SAD FALL.—A once beautiful woman, a distinguished actress and authoress, was lately put in the Tombs, New York, for drunkenness.

BOOKS.—There are three hundred thousand volumes in the private libraries in Boston.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

We send forth to our numerous list of subscribers and readers, with the present first number of the new year and volume, a cordial wish of a *happy new year* to each and all. It is *ten* years to-day since the present editor and proprietor of THE FLAG OF OUR UNION prepared and put to press the first number of this paper (then published by Mr. Gleason), a position which he has held to the present hour. Year after year it has steadily grown in public favor, until at present it enjoys *a circulation unequalled by any other literary weekly journal in the United States*, with the exception of Ballou's Pictorial. This unmistakable evidence of the popularity of our present style of conducting the paper, confirms us in the resolve to observe the same general plan of publication as heretofore, with such improvements from time to time as experience shall suggest.

The readers of the Flag will doubtless have already observed that we have lately introduced into its columns the names of some new and very talented contributors, all of whom are *regularly engaged* to write for the paper. The admirable novelette commenced in the present number, will be followed by others of a deeply interesting character; and we are determined to keep this department of the paper still unrivalled by all competitors, sparing no expense in the labor and talent we employ for this especial purpose. The large size of our paper enables us to give a very large amount of reading matter each week, and it shall continue to be of the same attractive, refined and excellent character.

From Maine to California, from the extreme East to the far West, from the cold North to the tropical South, THE FLAG OF OUR UNION penetrates weekly into the family circles of rich and poor, and is the favorite of old and young. This confidence in us shall be respected, and while we strive to amuse, we shall take especial care, also, never to offend by even a word that delicacy would blush to hear. There are controversial papers enough through the country; *this* paper is designed for the *million*, and therefore will be strictly neutral in all sectarian matters, either political or religious, and form a welcome visitor to every fireside in the land.

With these few seasonable words at the commencement of a new year and a new volume, we most heartily wish our readers, one and all, God speed!

MORAL OBLIQUITY.

The world has a singular way of dealing with moral-offenders. The man who steals fifty dollars need expect no sympathy—the state prison is too good for him; the defaulting treasurer is simply an unsuccessful financier. "Plate sin with gold," etc. There are some criminals who actually pride themselves on the greatness of their offences. A Norman and a Gascon, in the good old hanging times, were both sentenced to the gallows for theft. The sentence of the Norman was read first, rehearsing his crime—that of stealing a bag of nails. Confound the pitiful fellow!" said the Gascon; "to be hanged for a few nails!" When his own sentence was read, which set forth that he was to be executed for having stolen ten thousand crowns, he turned to the Norman and said: "Are those nails, you blockhead? Are those nails?" In fact, it made very little difference, since they came to the same end—a rope's end.

A LONG NAME.—A Spaniard, who rejoiced in several baptismal names, like most of his countrymen, and who was mounted on a miserable hack, came to an inn about midnight, and asked for admission. Boniface got out of bed, and asked who was there. The Spaniard replied: "Don Sancho Alphonso Ramirez Juan Pedro Carlos Francisco Domingo de Roxas de Sruniga de los Fuentes." "Go to thunder!" the inn-keeper said. "How can I lodge such an army with only one spare bed?" and he went to sleep again, without troubling his head about the poor traveller.

ABBOTT'S NAPOLEON.—The English reviewers lash this work tremendously, of course, as England is lashed so severely in it for her conduct to the man whose nephew she is lauding to the skies. One writer says: "His pen is a great whitewash brush, borrowed for the occasion, with which he goes to work, dashing and daubing, contriving dexterously the while to sprinkle some of his lime-water upon the garments of obnoxious bystanders, especially upon E'glish broadcloth."

MODERN PILGRIMS. By GEORGE WOOD, author of "Peter Schlemihl in America." 2 vols. 12mo. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co. 1855. The plan of this very able and original work was suggested by Hawthorne's "Celestial Rail-Road." It is an extended allegory. The different hotels at which the pilgrims stop represent different denominations of Christians, and different *sons* of popular theorists. The book is full of the happiest hits at prevalent "notions," including, of course, very many "Boston notions." Many well known characters, introduced under various pseudonyms, are sketched with infinite spirit and effect. A book that will live and make its mark.

A THOUGHTFUL WIDOW.—When the widow Wiscacre surveyed the funeral pomp which encircled her "dear departed" to the grave, she said: "Ah! how delighted my poor husband would be to see this; he was always so fond of ceremony!"

APPOSITE REFLECTION.—Hunx, a rich, avaricious and worthless person, having built him a "villa," inscribed over the gateway, "Let no wicked man enter here." "How is the proprietor to get in?" suggested an annoying spectator.

EUPHONIOUS NAME.—A fond "parient" in England has named his "hinfant" son and heir Albert Victor Louis Napoleon Malakoff Brown. Master A. V. L. N. M. Brown is a promising boy.

NEW PLANET.—M. Leverrier, at the last sitting of the Academy of Sciences, announced the discovery of a small, new planet by M. Goldsmith, a painter and amateur astronomer.

JUST SO.—A felon generally appears on the end of the fingers and thumbs. But the Post says they are sometimes on the end of a rope!

EDITORIAL INKDROPS.

We have passed the shortest day of the year. It seems almost spring when that happens.

One of our exchanges says, one ounce of mirth is worth ten thousand pounds of melancholy.

Elder Knapp, once a great revival preacher, is a large farmer, near Rockford, Illinois.

Gen. E. F. Walton, editor of the Vermont State Journal, died lately, aged 66 years.

All the contraband tobacco seized in England, is sent to the soldiers in the Crimea.

Mrs. Swisshelm tells young ladies, the secrets they dare not confide to a mother are dangerous.

Henry Ward Beecher says no house is complete without a cradle and an old arm-chair.

Jared B. Flagg, an artist and nephew of Allston, has abandoned the studio for the pulpit.

Many of the Sultan of Turkey's children are killed to avoid trouble in the state and harem.

The London Times used to abuse Louis Napoleon as much as it now lauds him.

Captain Ericson lost two of his fingers lately while superintending his engine.

The Sandwich Island belles are full grown women at fifteen or sixteen.

Inkermann, the name of the battle-ground in the Crimea, signifies "Lower Town."

A deer was shot in Maine, lately, that weighed two hundred and ninety-nine pounds.

Prof. Hare says that spiritual couples squabble like mortal ones.

He who combats his own evil passions fights the hardest battle of life.

It is said that drunkenness is frequent among the English troops in the Crimea.

Miss Dix, the philanthropist, has been visiting the benevolent institutions of France.

Count Ferri, of Padua, had 32,000 volumes, all written by female authors.

Punch says poverty must be a woman—it is fond of pinching a person.

Oysters are injurious when cooked in copper kettles and pans. Use tin.

Two autograph signatures of Washington were lately sold in New York for $17 25 cts.

Raphael Felix blundered again in charging exorbitant prices at Havana.

A fellow calling himself the Baron de Percy has recently been swindling the Vermonters.

SAMUEL KETTELL.

In the death of this gentleman, the editorial fraternity have lost one of the most accomplished members of the profession. He was about fifty five years of age at the time of his death, having been born in Newburyport in the year 1800. He received only a common school education, but his thirst for knowledge enabled him to master, without a teacher, seven or eight different languages. In 1824 he was employed as an assistant teacher by Mr. G. F. Thayer, of this city, and remained with him three or four years. In 1827 he published the "Personal Narrative of the First Voyage of Columbus," translated from a Spanish MS; in 1828, "Records of the Spanish Inquisition," from the Spanish; and in 1829, "Specimens of American Poetry." He was very fond of the science of ornithology, and aided Nuttall in his researches. In 1832 he sailed for Europe, and visited Italy, France and England. In 1835 he returned to Boston, and with Mr. S. G. Goodrich (Peter Parley) wrote many of the most popular books of the Parley series. In 1848 he assumed the conduct of the Boston Courier, and proved a vigorous champion of his party and principles. Modest and retiring, he was personally less known, perhaps, than many of his cotemporaries, but his influence was extensive. His death, not an unexpected one, was peaceful.

OPTICAL DELUSION.—Old Billy L. is pretty well known to the cattle dealers in Brighton and Cambridge. He is sharp-sighted in business, though short-sighted in his organs of vision. One day he had forgotten his spectacles, and an old lady lost him a pair of enormous magnifying power. The consequence was, he bought three calves, but paid for three oxen, being deceived by the power of the glasses.

MAKING MONEY.—A German chemist having dedicated a book to Pope Leo X., in which he boasted of having discovered the art of manufacturing gold, his holiness sent him an empty purse as a reward, instead of the magnificent present he expected, intimating that since he knew how to make gold, he could only be in want of a place to put in it.

SEND IN EARLY.—Persons engaged in getting up clubs for our paper, and striving for the prizes, should send in at once, as many names with the money as they have already secured, that we may know how to gauge our edition of the paper. As many names as is desired can be added up to the first of February.

A GOURMAND.—Old Major Beverly was the greatest eater we ever knew. He was also very near-sighted. One day, at a sumptuous entertainment, we overheard him asking the waiter, in whose hand he had slipped a dollar, "Are you sure I have eaten of everything?" Well, he had.

PROFITS OF FRUIT.—In Western New York, single trees of the Dyenne or Virgalieu pear have often afforded a return of twenty dollars or more, after being sent hundreds of miles to market. An acre of such trees, well managed, would far exceed in profit a five hundred acre farm.

SCIENCE.—An illiterate man was boasting how much he had travelled. "Then," said Dr. Drysalter, "you must be well acquainted with geography." "I was never there," replied our traveller; "but I reckon I went pretty near it."

MATHEMATICAL.—A young student being asked by his teacher what a tangent was, replied, readily, "a gentleman who keeps a tannery."

A CHEAP RELISH.—Cranberries in New York have been selling for $17 a barrel. Of course, everybody has them on their tables.

BALLOU'S PICTORIAL
DRAWING-ROOM COMPANION.

For the present week embraces the following contents:

The opening chapters of a new and gracefully written novellette, entitled, "The Contraband Lover, or The Secret of a Life." A true story of the south of France.

"Hope Ever," verses by WILLIAM ALLEYNE CRAFTS.

The Wooden Doctor's Parchment," a story by GRACE LEE.

"A Ghost on Shipboard," a sketch by EDGARS. FARNSWORTH.

"The Spirit Thrill," lines by ESTHER F. STEARNS.

"The Unlucky Man," a tale by MARY E. BRADBURY.

"Rose," a poem by SUE M. SCOTT.

"The Vigil and the Vision," a New Year's story by F. A. DUNYASE.

"The Little Lock of Hair," lines by GEORGE H. COOMER.

"Look before you Leap," a tale by M. V. ST. LEON.

ILLUSTRATIONS

A fine allegorical picture representing the Advent of the New Year.

Two designs of the Arctic regions, giving first, a view of the breaking up of the ice in those high latitudes, and second, a representation of that magnificent phenomenon, the Aurora Borealis.

A large two page picture delineating the celebrated Battle of New Orleans—one of the most artistic and effective engravings ever given in the Pictorial.

Portrait of Dr. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, one of our most accomplished and practical Boston physicians.

A representation of a Foraging Party in the Crimea.

Portrait of Don Pedro, King of Portugal.

Portrait of Don Fernando, Regent of Portugal.

Reception of the King by the Patriarch, at the Cathedral.

Recognition of the Sovereign on the Square of Commerce, in Lisbon.

☞ The Pictorial is for sale at all the Periodical Depots in the United States, at six cents a copy.

Foreign Items.

There is a probability of a free pardon being granted by the British government to the Welch chartists—Frost, Williams, and Jones.

The largest ship in England is the new one in Chatham docks, which is 300 feet long, 114 feet wide, and 90 feet high. It was commenced in 1851.

The English press are beginning to whack away at Thackery on the subject of his abuse of royalty. They think that tales shouldn't be told out of school.

The Princess Royal was fifteen on the 23d ult., and the event was duly celebrated at Windsor. She is said to be very tall of her age, and very Dutch-like in her appearance.

The Czar has dismissed Prince Menschikoff from his offices, as Chief of the Staff and of the Imperial Convoys, and has named Gen. Count Alderberg II. as his successor.

Rev. Dr. Vaughan, of St. Olaves Church, London, has been committed to jail to take his trial for making false entries in his register of burials, in order to obtain double fees.

Gen. Codrington is reported to have made it a *sine qua non* of his acceptance of the command, that a check should be put to the publication of newspaper correspondence from the Crimea.

The Duke of Cambridge has been so squibbed by Punch and other papers, that he is said to have actually signified to the commander-in-chief his desire to be again employed in active service.

The "Vaarelandet" of Copenhagen states that the American envoy to Denmark, has, owing to the good offices of Russia, received instructions from his government to prolong for two years the delay in which the payment of the Sound dues are to be denounced.

Within a radius of five miles around Sebastopol, it is supposed that more blood has been spilt, more lives sacrificed, and more misery inflicted, in a year, than in any other equal extent of the civilized world, in the same time, since the days of Noah's flood.

Dewdrops of Wisdom.

A diligent pen supplieth many thoughts.
Many a one digs his grave with his teeth.
Reason gains all men, by compelling none.
He is a slave to the greatest slave who serves none but himself.
Liberality consists less in giving profusely than in giving judiciously.
A vigilant man is said to sleep with one eye open and one leg out of bed.
Good and bad fortune are necessary, to prepare us to meet the vicissitudes of life.
If the beginnings of life have been vanity, its latter end can be no other than vexation of spirit.
The mind, like the soil, rises in value, according to the nature and degree of its cultivation.
Security springs from innocence, and the cheering influence of an approving conscience.
He who is slowest in making a promise is generally most faithful in performing it.
Toleration is odious to the intolerant; freedom to oppressors; property to robbers; and all prosperity to the envious.
The action of life is desire; as is the desire and delight, with its consequent actions, such is the life.
A man cannot call a better physician than himself, if he will take all the good advice he gives to others.
Eloquence is of two kinds—that of the heart, which is called divine; and that of the head, which is made up of conceit and sophistry.
He who studies only man, will get the body without the soul; he who studies only books, will get the soul without the body.

Joker's Budget.

Why is a Turkey a most unchristian fowl? Because it is two-thirds a Turk.

Why does the cook make more noise than the bell? Because the one makes a *din*, but the other a *dinner*.

The editor of an eastern paper says that many of his patrons would make good wheel horses, they hold back so well.

American physicians in the Russian army get but fifty dollars a month. Small pay that, but consider the opportunities for practice!

Our devil brags greatly on a watch of his that beat the town clock five hours and ten minutes in twenty-four hours, and two hours the next start.

A sailor who had hired a violin player to perform him some airs, on being asked what tune he preferred, replied "Nep *tune*, you lubber! and so does every one else."

A darkey on Staten Island, who pretends to have discovered a cure for hydrophobia, sports D. D. to his name. Upon being asked why he took these letters, he said: "Kase dat's right; dat's my name in full—Sam Poplar, D. D.—Dog Doctor."

We have, from the Boston Post, the important information that the Female Convent has purchased a pilot boat to send to Ireland to protect that "gem of the ocean" from invasion. The editor of the London Times is expected to take command.

Mrs. Matilda Maggs has a fresh shingle at her shop door in one of the eastern cities with this announcement: "Notis—I ar got sum no articles for sail such as krackers, kandies, knaphy, kups, sorsers and menny other articles so numerous to menshun, all celling cheep."

Quill and Scissors.

It is held by some astronomers that the sun, on account of its immense size, has not yet cooled down to the condition of our globe, but is passing slowly into that condition; hence a period must arrive, if true, when the sun will cease to give light, and when it will become a dark body. This opinion, however, is ably refuted by some of the most eminent men of science.

A London committee, who have been engaged in the investigation of the causes of the outbreak of cholera, which was so remarkable in the Soho district of London last year, have come to the unanimous conclusion that the sudden, severe, and concentrated outbreak, was in some manner attributable to the use of impure water.

Several years ago, F. C. Sherman and others attached the printing materials of the Chicago Advertiser for a debt which the proprietor, Alfred Dutch, owed them; he has at length succeeded in getting a verdict for $15,000 against them for injury to his presses, and throwing his type into pi, in their rough manner of taking possession.

Signora and Signor Caroni, in San Francisco, lately performed the feat of walking a tight rope from the ground in front of the International Hotel to the fourth story window of the building. The distance was about 175 feet, and the rise near 60. A large assemblage witnessed the exhibition.

The Czar, by an autograph letter, has conferred on General Liprandi, the commander of the 6th Infantry Corps, the order of Vladimir of the Second Class, with the swords, for his zealous service during his stay in the Crimea, and particularly for the bravery and talent which he showed at the battle of the Tchernaya.

Conversions to Christianity are rapidly multiplying in China. At Amoy, according to the Rev. Mr. Johnstone, of the Scotch Free church, the converts have increased seven fold during the last two years, and the number of applicants for admission was never greater.

Among the many remarkable objects in the patent office at Washington, and which evince what mechanical skill can do, is an invention that picks up pins from a heap, turns them all around with their heads up, and sticks them in papers in regular rows.

About a year ago, Sir G. Grey, governor of New Zealand, stated that he had visited nearly every one of the missionary stations in those islands, and that he believed that, out of 100,000 natives, there were not more than one thousand who did not profess Christianity.

Two young men, by the name of Tufts and Bean, recently attempted to cross a pond on the ice, in Northwood, N. H., when the ice broke, and Tufts sank and did not rise again. Bean was rescued after having clung to the ice about an hour and a half.

The New York Express says: "Balls, weddings, dinners, parties of all kinds prevail. Extravagance greater than ever. Jewels and diamonds more abundant. Even 12,000 Russian sable capes are now seen in the streets! Californian gold is making fools of us."

The Gospel Messenger argues that the curse of the age is fine preaching: it is morbid and pestilential. The attempt to say fine things in the pulpit is a solemn sin; and fine sermons—like all other finery—are very evanescent in their influence.

The Elmira (N. Y.) Advertiser says there is a dwarf in that village, about 18 years of age, who drinks every day, at one time, two ounces of laudanum. Various means have been tried to break him of his pernicious habit, but without effect.

The Surrey Zoological, of London, and the Jardin des Plants, of Paris, were the suggestors to Barnum of his noble enterprise, of establishing a grand zoological garden in New York, for which purpose he sold his museum, as stated some time since.

In Lincolnville, Illinois, recently, the women, armed with axes, shovels, hatchets, knives and pistols, marched to Boyd's bowling saloon, and destroyed all the liquor, cigars, tobacco, etc., on the premises. They also nearly demolished the house.

In Chicago, a short time since, while the judge of the Recorder's Court was trying a case of horse stealing, his own horse and buggy were stolen from the vicinity of the court-room.

There have been 129 vessels launched at different points on the lakes, during the last season, with an aggregate tonnage of 46,567, of which 9655 were of steam, and 32,641 sail.

The Albany Register says the census returns have been so far compiled as to give the entire population of the State, which is 3,466,118.

Samuel Miller, of the United States Marine Corps, died, recently, at the advanced age of 81 years.

Marriages.

In this city, by Rev. Mr. Skinner, Mr. Horatio N. Rice to Miss Caroline G. Vickery.

By Rev. Mr. Bartol, Mr. N. B. Abbott, of North Reading, to Miss Hannah C. Hersey.

By Rev. Mr. Craft, Mr. John Mason to Miss Sarah Kendrick.

By Rev. Mr. Randall, Mr. J. H. C. Bistermann to Miss Louisa Hollingsworth.

By Rev. Dr. Jenks, Mr. Charles Crocker, of Bath, Me., to Miss Caroline Eaton.

By Rev. Mr. Robbins, Mr. Charles Torrey to Miss Abbie T. Lincoln.

At Charlestown, by Rev. Mr. Hutchins, Mr. James Sullivan to Miss Harriet M. Stone.

At Lynn, Mr. Samuel J. Berry to Miss Hesta A. Batchelder; Mr. Eben Goldthwait to Miss Martha E. Low.

At Salem, by Rev. Mr. Carlton, Mr. Paris Veno to Miss Catharine Kenan.

At Dedham, by Rev. Dr. Burgess, E. T. Sherman, Esq., of Lowell, to Miss Rebecca S. Aiken.

At South Hingham, by Rev. Mr. Clarke, Mr. Samuel Hersey to Miss Caroline L. Stoddard.

At Newburyport, by Rev. Mr. Horton, Mr. David T. Lamont, of Chicago, Ill., to Miss Lizzie B. Knapp.

At New Bedford, by Rev. Mr. How, Mr. James B. Scott to Mrs. Almira Levins.

At Plainfield, by Rev. Mr. Starks, Mr. Andrew J. Vincent, of Cheshire, to Miss Emerette L. Williams.

At Hollow Falls, Vt., by Rev. Dr. Clapp, S. G. Philpps, Esq. to Miss Mary P. Haywood.

Deaths.

In this city, Mrs. Abigail Brown, 72; Miss Mary C. Monahan, 35; Mrs. Catharine S. Sackett, 47; Miss Charlotte F. Barton, 26; Mr. Alexander Edwards, 56; Mr. David Oliver, 74; Mr. William Devine, 19; Miss Helen V. Allen, 18.

At Cambridgeport, Mrs. Lydia Edwards, of Newburyport, 68.

At West Cambridge, Mr. Thomas H. Teel, 68.

At Medford, Dea. Edward W. Fay, 56.

At Quincy, Mrs. Esther, widow of the late Dea. Samuel Bass, 86.

At Salem, Mrs. Lydia E. Tripp, 28; Widow Mary Porter, 69; Mr. Henry W. Rogers, 31.

At South Danvers, Mr. Alvan Morrill, 49; Mrs. Ellen S. Clark, 25; Miss Eunice P. Pierce, 19.

At Chelsea, Dea. Thomas Bachelor, 80.

At Ipswich, Mr. Levi Willet, 46.

At Walpole, Mr. Samuel Payson, 57.

At Haverhill, Mrs. Ann Wingate, 79; Mr. Stephen Hansom, 56.

At Cambridge, Sylvanus Holbrook, 66.

At Framingham, Mr. Charles W. Kingman, 24.

At Fairmont (Three Rivers), Mr. Ebenezer Baker, a revolutionary soldier, 92.

At East Stoughton, Widow Hannah Miles, 90.

At Newburyport, Mrs. Sarah S. Bryant, 28; Mr. Benjamin F. Hooker, 21.

At Southborough, Mr. Luther Angier, 80.

At Sandwich, Widow Mary H. Paddock, 69; Widow Mary Coffin, 86.

At Brooklyn, N. Y., Mr. Timothy Skidmore, 36.

At Troy, Me., Capt. William March, 83; Mr. Mark Persaud, 66.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE AUTUMN FLOWER.

BY T. A. SELDEN.

The leaves were falling around me,
In a wood far away;
Where I stood alone and thoughtful,
On a bleak autumn day.
No sound was heard but the singing
Of fall birds on the trees,
Or the sighing through the dense woods
Of the autumn's breeze;
But amid all this sad decay,
A little wildwood flower
Modestly raised its tiny head,
Beneath the colored bower.

I saw it and I was gladdened,
And hope came to my heart,
And I thought that when death bids us
From this vain world depart,
We are pierced with grief and sorrow,
Till like this simple flower,
Religion sheds its light around,
And consoles us in that hour;
When we leave this world behind us,
And those whom best we love,
To fly to heavenly regions,
And be with God above.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

MARRIED AND SINGLE.

BY SUSAN H. BLAISDELL.

The latest rays of sunset shone faltingly in through the long windows of the lofty library, resting brightest upon the figures of two persons who sat opposite each other, at a paper-strewn table in the centre of the apartment, and shedding long lines of light upon the wall beyond; but leaving the rest of the place, with its many nooks and angles, in gradually deepening shadow. It was a winter sunset, silent and mournful. There was desolation and sadness in its feeble radiance; and the dusk that was everywhere growing about the old library, made it seem more desolate — more lonely and melancholy still.

The brother and sister sat opposite each other; she, facing the light, that fully illumined her calm and handsome countenance, which was somewhat more serious than usual, to night, and somewhat paler, as well; he, with the outline of a finely shaped and haughty head strongly defined against the background of the sunset glow, his dark face, with its proud features, and prescient sharp and impatient expression, left in shadow, so that its peculiar traits were scarcely perceptible; but no incorrect estimate of them might be formed from the cold, yet hasty and irritated tone with which he addressed his sister.

"You are blind to your own advantages, Caroline!" he was saying. "That you should refuse Hartley Colverton is entirely incomprehensible to me. I insist on an explanation of your reasons."

He waxed hotter as he proceeded. She answered, calmly:

"An explanation would, in this case, be useless, Maurice. For so inclined are you to favor the suit of Mr. Colverton, that any reason which I might choose to render, would have no weight with you. I merely say, then, that I do not wish to marry him."

He regarded her in silence for a moment; but the frown on his brow was blacker than the shadows that surrounded it. He would have sworn, if he had dared. As it was, for bare self-respect, he kept down his wrath; but the bitter sneer that accompanied his next words, quite revealed to Caroline Morton the smothered volcano that she had almost, by her woman's rebellion, caused to burst forth.

"So! You are not too perfect, notwithstanding the declaration of your admiring friends, to betray the childish whimsicality belonging to your sweet sex! And, by my faith!—but you exercise your prerogative gloriously!"

She slightly colored; but returned, with unruffled quiet of manner:

"I am not whimsical, Maurice, and you know it perfectly well. You know it too well to repeat your words."

Maurice Morton did know it. And knowing it, was sufficiently wise to refrain from contesting the point. But it only angered him the more, that he was unable to prove her in the wrong.

"In any case, it is due to me that you should specify your reasons, if you have any worth stating, for declining him."

"I do not perceive the obligation. I am not aware of being accountable to any one for my actions; and especially in a matter which, like this, concerns the happiness of myself alone."

"Then you disown my right to a voice in the affair?" he uttered, wrathfully.

"Not so, Maurice. Since the death of our parents," and she glanced sadly downward at her mourning attire, "I have, in every instance of importance, sought your advice, deferred to your opinion; and we have seldom differed. I have always felt happier in knowing that I had some one stronger than myself to lean upon, in the consciousness,"—her voice quivered—"that I was not quite alone in the world. Now I see but too clearly the path which it is necessary for me to take in order to avoid much unhappiness in the future; and believe me, it is deeply painful to me that we do not think alike on this subject. Yes, Maurice, it is yours to advise me—to be my support; but O, my brother, I entreat you to let your judgment be unbiassed! To open your eyes to the true aspect of things; for—"

"All this, I suppose," he interrupted, coldly, "means, that so long as I am pliable enough to mould my judgment by yours, so long you are content to *yield* to my opinions; but the moment that sees our views at variance, gives you an excuse for freeing yourself from my direction. So be it!"

"Maurice, Maurice!" she cried, "you misunderstand me—wilfully misunderstand me!"

"I do not think so."

"It is true. You know that I ever sacrificed my will to yours, where I knew you in the right; and now it should be the same; but you are in the wrong. You are deceived with regard to Mr. Colverton's principles; your friendship for him blinds you to his defects; and I cannot—nay, I *will* not trust my well-being to the care of such a man!"

"Aha! there it is—his principles!" exclaimed Maurice Morton, catching at her words. "Well, what have you to say against Hartley Colverton's principles?"

"I will say nothing, Maurice," returned Miss Morton; "and if you were not so strangely infatuated, that no words can show you his defects, you will not need to ask me."

"Indeed!" he said, sarcastically. "Well, what appalling defect can it be, I wonder? Curious that no other woman was ever fortunate enough to discover it! You are marvellously particular," he continued, while his tone became most bitter, "that you can take the trouble to pick out a flaw, imperceptible to others, in a man who leads the world of fashion, and has never shown himself other than a gentleman! And most singularly fortunate, too," (ironically) "that you can afford, with the pittance you possess, to throw away a magnificent fortune, and a home that another in your circumstances would be thankful to secure."

"Maurice!"

She rose from her seat, with a glance of calm and sorrowful rebuke.

"I know that the Morton estate belongs to you," she said. "I know that I have no right here; and especially since you are married. I know that the time is fast approaching when I must be expected to seek another home; but I did not need you to tell me of it."

And straightway Caroline Morton left the library; left it to its shadows and its gloom, and her somewhat discomfited and lordly brother to his own reflections. He had not expected she would make such direct application of his last words. "But since it is so," he said, hotly, "let the rebellious girl take her own course. She will soon learn to repent her folly."

Miss Morton had scarcely taken her departure, before the hall door was heard to open and close, and directly there ran into the library a handsome young girl, with flushed cheeks and animated dark eyes, laughing happily, and bringing in a current of the fresh and frosty air from out-of-doors. She was the youngest of the three —Jessie Morton—and the pet of both Maurice and Caroline, as she had been the pet of her parents.

Her brother's severe countenance relaxed into a smile, as she came running to the amply-filled grate, laughing, and looking so charmingly happy and careless, to warm her hands. Her warm gray eyes sparkled in the pleasant firelight, and her red cheeks grew redder, as she leaned over the fender. Maurice Morton thought she had never looked so lovely; and there came, besides, the exulting reflection that for her, at least, he was about to secure a brilliant position, an eligible *parti*. No wonder he grew bland—self-satisfied.

"Where have you been, Jessie?" he said.

"Down on the lake, sliding. O, glorious, Maurice! I had such a grand time, sir!"

He looked a reproof.

"What *you*, Jessie Morton?—my sister, who is to be married in three weeks?"

She glanced up in his face with mirthful eyes, and a saucy, confident smile.

"O, don't be severe, Maurice! Wait till my stiff, starched-up lover—"

"Jessie! I must insist upon your taking a more appropriate tone in speaking of Mr. Wellingcourt."

"Ah, well; I mean to behave well enough when he comes, as I was about to say when you had the impoliteness to interrupt me;" and the incorrigible maiden cast a sidelong, mischievous glance at her brother; "but *until* then, why, I intend to have my liberty. But where is Caroline, I wonder? I expected to find her here. She was to come in at four, you know, to give you an answer to that all-important question of Mr. Colverton's."

"Your sister has been here," was his reply.

"She has? And of course Hartley is to be—that is to say, he is accepted?" she said, eagerly.

He looked straight into the fire.

"On the contrary, Caroline, from some motive best known to herself, has decidedly refused Mr. Colverton's offer."

Jessie sprang from her chair.

"It is not possible, Maurice! O, how could she!—and at twenty-six, too! She never will have another offer, never. She will be that most detestable of all horrors, an old maid! But she *shall* have Mr. Colverton, if I can make her." And the impetuous Jessie was springing to the door.

"Stop—stop a moment, Jessie!" said her brother, hastily.

But he was unheard. The impulsive young girl was already half way up stairs; and he sank back in his chair again.

"It is as well, perhaps, after all," he murmured, "to dispense with cautions. They would only make the matter worse. But at all events, *her* eloquence will never prevail."

And it did not. Jessie Morton's dread of seeing her sister an old maid lent her appeal the most passionate and persuasive earnestness; but all to no purpose. She enlarged on every advantage, possible and probable, attendant on the proposed union; she extolled the elegant personal appearance, the address, and the talents of Mr. Colverton, to the skies; she begged, and coaxed, and reproached, by turns, till she was at a dead, despairing loss for further argument; and in vain! It was like the vexed beating of a tiny rill against the sides of a rock-based tower. Caroline smiled and was grave, alternately, as she listened to Jessie's pleading; but not an inch did she yield. What the anger and severity of Maurice had been unable to effect, the persuasions of little, volatile Jessie were equally hopeless in their attempts at forwarding.

"And I did so hope," pouted the young girl, "that we should be married at the same time! And now to think that you utterly and altogether refuse Mr. Colverton's offer! What *can* make you so obstinate, Caroline?"

"What should make me, Jessie?" said the elder sister, half gravely, half smilingly; "what do you suppose makes me?"

"Indeed, it is more than I can tell," answered the young girl, with slight and pretty pettishness; "and it is as much of a puzzle, I am sure, to tell why you have refused every offer that has been made you since you were eighteen. And here you are unmarried at twenty-six, and throw away *such* a chance!"

"Jessie," said Caroline, seriously, taking her sister's hand, "should I marry a man to whom I am perfectly indifferent?—who, I am confident, would make my life an unhappy one?"

"Caroline, that is just all nonsense," exclaimed Jessie, despairingly. "All I know is, that you, the handsomest and most graceful woman in the county, who has had six proposals to every other girl's one, and for whom half a dozen gentlemen have broken their hearts; you, Caroline Morton, the lovely and admired daughter of the late Charles Morton, of Morton Place, —— Shire—will be an old maid, after all!"

And in a very undignified passion of grief and passion, the old maid-hating Jessie ran out of the room.

Caroline was somewhat amused at her petulant vehemence, and for a moment could not forbear laughing at her; but the laughter was soon quieted, and a time of serious and most painful reflection followed. For the first time in her life, she found herself at variance with her brother; his anger was severely distressing to her; and more distressing the remembrance of the unguarded words, which, in his wrathful mood, had escaped him, giving rise to the sorrowful and rebuking answer with which she had left him.

"Am I, am I, indeed," she said, to herself, with grief and shame, "growing an encumbrance here?—*we* did I apply to his words a meaning which did him injustice?"

In the winter twilight that was fast deepening into night, Caroline Morton sat in her lonely chamber, wrapt in a most unhappy reverie. What her thoughts were, may not be known; but ere that hour passed, her resolution was made, her path for the future marked out.

Emily, the wife of Maurice, met her in the drawing room that evening; and she, too, made it a point to mention to Caroline her opinion concerning the all-engrossing subject. In her calm, business-like way, she spoke of the incalculable advantages of such a match as the one under discussion, and advised her sister-in-law to reconsider the subject.

"You will take a very unwise step in sending so decided a refusal to his suit," she said; "a step which you cannot but repent hereafter. Hartley Colverton would be an eligible husband for any woman. Of course, we should be sorry to part with you, here; but you will naturally marry in the lapse of a year or two, at any rate; and you will do well to accept the present opportunity, since it is scarcely probable that a better will present itself."

Caroline, serious, even bitter, as was her mood, could not but smile.

"You think it, then, a matter of course that I shall marry at some time?" she said.

"I do. You will not lead a single life. No woman, in my ideas, would do so, of her own free will."

"You are slightly mistaken," returned Caroline, gently. "You see that I can have Hartley Colverton by uttering a single word. That word I never shall utter. Whether, if I live and die a single woman, the case is a compulsory one, you will be judge."

"Then you have fully determined to decline his proposal?"

"Fully. I have other views. I shall leave Morton Place immediately on the marriage of Jessie, and—"

Mrs. Morton's beautiful blue eyes were raised with a glance of surprise to Caroline's face. Caroline paused an instant, and then concluding; "You can tell this to Maurice to-night if you like," turned away to chat with a gentleman visitor whom the domestic had just announced, thus briefly dismissing a subject, the discussion of which had become intensely distasteful to her. She could not judge of the reception which the announcement of her intention would meet with, but her mind was firmly made up.

Mrs. Morton acquainted her husband that night with the design of his sister. Slightly startled by this, he made a point of waiting instantly on Caroline, to ascertain if it were actually her intention to leave Morton Place. Miss Morton assured him of the fixedness of her determination.

"May I ask," he said, "what course you propose taking, if you go from here?"

"I shall reside at the Home Farm, which was left me by our father," returned Caroline, very quietly.

Maurice Morton took two or three turns up and down the apartment, with folded arms and head bent. There was a stern and disturbed expression upon his haughty features, that told of perplexity and annoyance. Consciousness was there, too.

Presently stopping short, he came and sat down by his sister.

"Caroline," he said, uneasily, "I cannot help thinking that this sudden resolution of yours has some connexion with our yesterday's conversation in the library."

She was silent.

"If it is so," he continued; "if you were hurt by any observation of mine, I have only to say that I think you must have misapprehended my meaning, as, from your parting words, I can chided you had done. I simply alluded to the somewhat narrow income you possess, not to your position here. That you should have placed so injurious, though perhaps not unwarrantable a construction, upon my somewhat ill-advised remark, is, believe me, exceedingly painful. It has been a happiness for us all to have you make Morton Place your home. To feel that *I* have been the means of causing you to entertain a different view, touches me nearly."

And it did; it cut his pride, his delicacy, most keenly, though at first he had been too angry to feel it so deeply. Morton Place belonged to Maurice since his father's death; and having taken up his residence here, with his wife, he had also prevailed upon Caroline and Jessie to continue to dwell in their old home. As a matter of course, Caroline felt differently about remaining now that his brother's wife was mistress where she, herself, so long had reigned; but Maurice had delicately managed to banish hitherto everything like a consciousness of dependence on his sister's part. Now he had, by his own hasty temper, brought on the very evil he had striven to avert.

Miss Morton saw the pain this affair caused him, and sincerely regretted now the wrong done.

"Maurice," she said, gently, "I am sorry for this. I feel that you would never have given me pain intentionally. I know that you have never been otherwise than pleased to have me remain at Morton. But—"

"Caroline, do not say it," he uttered, energetically. "Say only that you forgive me, and will remain here, in your rightful home; for being mine, it is also yours."

"I think it better not, Maurice; but do not imagine that you are the cause," she hastened to add. "The truth is, I have for a long time been contemplating a visit at the farm; and since I have been dwelling upon the matter so seriously it would be as well, perhaps, not to change my plans. I shall continue, however," and she smiled, "to regard Morton as a kind of second home, where I may come when I please, and be always sure of a welcome. I shall be very happy, also, to receive you and Emily at the farm, whenever you feel inclined to make me a visit."

He looked dissatisfied. It hurt him that Caroline should persist in her intention; but he was forced to yield.

"The marriage of Jessie will take place shortly," she said, "and directly she goes away, I shall leave for the farm. I think, in such a lovely place as that, my life will be happy, notwithstanding it is destined to be a single one."

Her brother met her light smile with laughing eyes.

"Then you *never* mean to marry? You intend to remain that horrible abomination, that bugbear of Jessie's ideas—a single woman?"

"I do. I desire no nearer ties than those that bind me at this moment; and never will assume them. I am free; I have none to control me; and I may shape my way as I will. Let me take my own course, Maurice, and then nobody will be to blame if I am discontented."

"Do as you like, Caroline. Perhaps, as you say, you will be happier as a single woman; but I cannot help expressing my disappointment that you have refused Mr. Colverton."

"You will be glad some day that I caused this disappointment."

"You perplex me, Caroline. What do you mean?"

"Wait, Maurice, and you will see."

He was silent and thoughtful for some moments, reflecting upon his sister's singular *penchant* for—singularity.

"Caroline," he cried, suddenly, "tell me, do you think there is no happiness in married life?"

His sister laughed.

"How prone you are to catch at extremes, Maurice! No, indeed, I do not think so. I have seen married people the happiest in the world. Our own parents, for instance;" and she grew serious; "but in my creed, it is set down that there is as much happiness in the single as the married state, if people could only think so. I hold that each one, provided he has only sufficient self-dependence, can make his own happiness."

And notwithstanding the wonder and disapprobation of her friends, called forth by her peculiar modes of thinking, and by her repeated refusals of the many offers she received, Caroline Morton held her quiet course, unruffled and serene, and professed herself perfectly willing to own the careless, and often spiteful, appellation bestowed upon her by the many, heeling little the estimation depending upon a mere title. The old maid was a very contented and happy old maid, for all their sneers.

Time went his tireless round, and Jessie, the pet and the beauty, was married. As the bride of the aristocratic and elegant Mr. Wellingcourt, and mistress of unnumbered luxuries, with her country residence and her town house, her magnificent equipages, her jewels, the envy of a thousand wealthy dames, and gold in Midas profusion at her command, Jessie was now pronounced the most fortunate of women. True, she was a spoiled and petted child, scarcely seventeen years old, full of whim and caprice, and merry as a bird; while Mr. Wellingcourt was a man of nearly forty, precise, stiff and methodical, fond of quiet, and accustomed to enjoy it. Jessie and her husband were paired, and that was all. But, of course, they were expected to be happy.

As soon as the bride and bridegroom had departed from Morton, Caroline also bade adieu to Maurice and his wife, and sought the retirement of her new home, to enter upon the life she had chosen. There was nothing to make it otherwise than a pleasant one. Caroline had no dread of solitude, for in her own resources she found ample food, both for employment and amusement. But she was not entirely dependent upon these either; for in the care of the well-stocked and well-kept farm on which she lived, there was enough to do.

It was a busy place. The farm was a large one, and the work-people employed upon it, who had been for many years in her father's employ, being accustomed to the place, seemed as a part of it. All things went on harmoniously. The man whom Caroline kept to look after the farm, kept everything in order, and maintained a close and faithful watch over her interests. Thrift and plenty followed his efforts; and with honest zeal, he took pride in adding to the little fortune of his master's daughter.

Caroline was a happy woman. The life she led here was a busy and cheerful one; and not only busy and cheerful, but useful as well; for she cared not alone for her own well-being, but for that of others. She found ways of doing a great deal of good among the village people with the means that Providence had bestowed upon her, and there was always some one whom she could benefit in one way or another. For many poor, she obtained employment; among the sick, Caroline Morton's name was a beloved one; to all she was a true and noble friend, and a Christian neighbor—the neighbor, who "passed *not* by on the other side." Everybody was the better for Caroline Morton's coming to the Home Farm.

She had no moment unemployed, for her attention, scarcely free from one engrossing object, was directed to another, calling forth equal energies and equal interest. She laughed at the idea of loneliness; she had no time to be lonely. A year passed before she could think it half gone, and another went by; and another; and the quiet, sincere happiness she felt, only grew deeper and more abiding. Living not for herself so much as for others, she realized the true value of life. She enjoyed that life to the utmost. It was most sweet to her, for her own noble efforts lent it its actual zest.

Maurice and his wife made her a visit during the first year of her residence at the farm. They made no allusion to Mr. Colverton, or any of the many suitors whom she had discarded. It was already evident, from the general appearance of things, that Caroline had mistaken neither herself nor her sphere. They found her happy, cheerful, industrious, and more beautiful than ever.

Mrs. Maurice Morton beheld the daily avocations of her sister-in-law with no little curiosity and interest.

"Caroline, how do you find time to do all this, and to see to so many people?" she said.

"They are all I have to see to," she answered, smilingly; "and I have twenty-four hours in every one of my days. You can tell now, perhaps, how much better it was that I should not marry. A husband in addition to my household, would effectually prevent me from attending to anything beyond them, so that I could do nothing of all that I find to do now; for husbands are selfish creatures, Emily;" and she glanced laughingly up towards Maurice.

"Then, I suppose," said her brother, with an air of amusement, "I suppose you consider your household, your neighbors, and your pensioners, in the light of a husband?"

"Exactly. I wish for no better. I am very happy, Maurice."

And in her clear beaming eyes and truthful smile, the brother read the truth of her assertion.

They had anticipated a rather dull and tedious visit, at a quiet farm house, with little to relieve the tedium of a country life. They found a most agreeable difference; they became convinced that Caroline's judgment was better than theirs. Instead of subsiding into a selfish, capricious old maid, leading a forlorn, solitary, monotonous existence, Caroline made life beautiful, both for others and herself, and became more agreeable every day. Maurice and his wife allowed that they had been wrong.

They had not seen Jessie since her marriage. Several letters had been received from her while travelling with her husband; letters describing the thousand-and-one gaieties into which she entered, the society in which she mingled,

"And other brilliant matters of that sort."

But lately, these epistles came more irregularly, were more brief and hurried, and altogether less satisfactory. Maurice grew thoughtful, and as he spoke of it, sighed. Emily, with all her natural indolence and apathetic indifference of manner, was roused into interest as the matter was mentioned, and the why and wherefore discussed.

"You may be confident," she would say, to Caroline, "that she is so engrossed in the general gaiety everywhere she goes, as to find a multitude of excuses for not writing as she used to."

Another month, and Maurice and Emily left the farm, earnestly pressing Caroline to come to them soon, and gaining from her a kind of conditional promise to comply with their request during the approaching winter. Then she was left alone once more to continue her customary routine of duties. And once more, in the midst of those duties, she forgot the great world that stretched beyond the circling hills which bounded the horizon, finding quiet and serene contentment in the lot she had chosen, and the places where that lot was cast.

Autumn came. The harvest was gathered in, and in all Caroline's barns and granaries these was not room for the plenty that flowed in upon her from the full and prosperous year. The poor flocked round her doors, and were sharers of her abundance, and went away with glad and grateful hearts. And Caroline Morton, rejoicing in her prosperity, was glad for the sake of those about her. "Freely ye have received—freely give." She bore in her heart the command, and scattered, with unsparing bounty, the largeness of her many blessings.

The winter came. And then leaving for a time the scene of her labors and her happiness, she went to pay the expected visit to Morton. She found Maurice and his wife well, and truly glad to receive her. From Jessie and her husband no news had come very lately. All were perplexed. But Caroline saw that Maurice was more than perplexed. He was anxious—uneasy. And her own fears and suspicions, within a little while awakened, grew with tenfold strength.

"Maurice," she said, earnestly, "this is very strange. These letters—so brief, so abrupt, so strained and artificial in their style—are not like our merry, rattling Jessie. And latterly, that even these should cease. Maurice, tell me what you think!"

He was grave. A heavy sigh, struggling for utterance, was repressed.

"I do not know what to think, *Caroline*," he answered; "I do not know what to *fear*: but I am afraid there has been a mistake; and if so, I have helped to make it?" And his voice grew hoarse; his manner desperate.

The subject was not often reverted to; but there was not a day in which each one did not think of it with anxiety and suspense. The time of her visit being expired, Caroline returned to her own dwelling; but she carried with her a less careless heart than she had borne away from it. The sight of her beloved home, with its gladdening welcomes, revived and cheered her of many engrossing and anon steal in a the her otherwise perfect away, and no news can er sister. But it was

One day, when sp wide and lovely land carriage drove slowly leading to the door of Caroline, sewing in h forward to look from coachman lowered the brown travelling dress, ret, descended from it, the house. She advance ment where Caroline st the threshold, regardin

She was young and death. A reckless, wo ed itself upon her d sweet, dark eyes were

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"Surely, surely, this ed, in a tone scarcely that filled her.

"Why yes, *it is* Jes "Am I so altered, then know me?"

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"O, Caroline, I am glad!" she said, looking ing face above her w weeping. "I have wa come, and I never could

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"It is true! He wa me come! And at last after I got here, and the ference to him, afterwar bedient; so I came al now, Caroline. Let me

So Caroline led the p and there, sitting by th room, she listened to and one; and the young free while she told it.

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"But I could not bear ling. "It was so soon grand old house! And the gave it up, for a little with me, as he had been not like it, and told me I knew I should be oblig soon enough, and I me was mine.

"Then he used to c He told me, more than have me go out so much more attention than he d do. But whose fault w flushed. "I had never be courted, and flattered took me out into the wo sweet—so sweet that I w I had been led into. He were out together, and with gaiety, so that I s hour at home. Then he ill-humored. He could looked at or spoken to; that if I would not with should be a separation.

She wept passionatel while she pitied her hea cordy, could trust here relaxed. If Jessie had her youth excuse her!

"Finally," continued it so eternity, that I was longer. I let him take a hard! I cried every da to him sometimes; and angry still. He reproac answered him angrily; a last I told him I desired see you all. He declared no unwilling to please hi himself to please me. I go away from him, when at home; he would not

"For a time, I submitt what to do. I was so lo resolved, Caroline! You you had thought me cru was so miserable! I wa ness. I asked him again will be refused. I told h them—if I walked every do it. He told me—so that if I came, I should

its gladdening welcome and pleasant associations, revived and cheered her; yet in the midst of her many engrossing duties here, would ever and anon steal in a thought of Jessie, to disturb her otherwise perfect peace. The winter wore away, and no news came from the petted younger sister. But it was coming soon enough.

One day, when spring was garlanding the wide and lovely land with bloom, a magnificent carriage drove slowly up the wide green lawn leading to the door of the farm house; and as Caroline, sewing in her cool sitting-room, bent forward to look from the latticed window, the coachman lowered the steps, a lady attired in a brown travelling dress, and a plain straw bonnet, descended from it, and immediately entered the house. She advanced directly into the apartment where Caroline sat, and paused just within the threshold, regarding her silently.

She was young and beautiful, but pale as death. A reckless, weary, careworn look stamped itself upon her delicate features, and the sweet, dark eyes were almost haggard.

Slowly Caroline rose, and the work fell from her unconscious hand, while, with paling cheeks, she gazed upon the stranger's face.

"Surely, surely, this is not Jessie!" she uttered, in a tone scarcely audible for the emotion that filled her.

"Why yes, it *is* Jessie!" answered the wife. "Am I so altered, then, that Caroline does not know me?"

She tried to laugh, as of old, in her happy girlhood; but the tears sprung first, and quenched the false sparkle of mirth. Without a word, Caroline's arms were about her; Caroline's soft and loving kisses were pressed upon her pale brow, and the poor, weary child laid her head once more on her sister's breast—the shelter of her maiden days—where never such mournful tears had she shed before.

"O, Caroline, I am so glad to see you—so glad!" she said, looking up into the gentle, pitying face above her with mingled smiles and weeping. "I have wanted so many times to come, and I never could!"

"Why not?" asked Caroline, quietly removing the bonnet and shawl, and smoothing with caressing tenderness, the young girl's bright hair.

A painful flush stole over the sweet face.

"He would not come." The words were almost whispered.

Caroline's eyes grew stern.

"And now?"

"I came without him. He dared me, and I came!"

"Jessie!"

"It is true! He was cruel, cruel, not to let me come! And at last I thought I might die after I got here, and then it would make no difference to him, afterward, that I had been disobedient; so I came alone. And I am so tired now, Caroline. Let me lie down."

So Caroline led the poor child to her chamber, and there, sitting by the couch in the darkened room, she listened to Jessie's story. It was a sad one; and the young girl's tears fell fast and free while she told it.

It was the history of an almost broken heart. Jessie had seen little happiness since her marriage. She had pleased her husband at first with her piquant, merry ways, with her childishness and careless abandon; he had indulged and petted her to excess, gratifying every possible wish, and pleased in seeing her admired and courted; but the novelty wore off, and old habits asserting their sway, he sought to withdraw her from the sound of gaiety into which he himself had introduced her, to seclude her from society, young as she was, within the stately and solitary home which he had hitherto occupied alone.

"But I could not bear to go," said Jessie, sobbing. "It was so soon to shut me up in that grand old house! And I would not yield. So he gave it up, for a little while, and went about with me, as he had been used to do. But he did not like it, and told me so. I did not mind it. I knew I should be obliged to give up my liberty soon enough, and I meant to enjoy it while it was mine.

"Then he used to speak plainly sometimes. He told me, more than once, that he would not have me go out so much. He said I attracted more attention than he chose that his wife should do. But whose fault was it?" and her cheek flushed. "I had never known what it was to be courted, and flattered, and admired, before he took me out into the world, and I found it very sweet—so sweet that I would not leave the path I had been led into. Evening after evening we were out together, and I grew fairly bewildered with gaiety, so that I never could bear a quiet hour at home. Then he grew jealous, irritable, ill-humored. He could not bear to have me looked at or spoken to; and at last he declared that if I would not withdraw from society, there should be a separation. Think of it, Caroline!"

She wept passionately; but Caroline, even while she pitied her beautiful, ill-fated sister sincerely, could trust herself neither to pity nor rebuke. If Jessie had been wrong, might not her youth excuse her?

"Finally," continued Jessie, "he commanded it so sternly, that I was truly afraid to resist any longer. I let him take me away; but it was so hard! I cried every day. I would not speak to him sometimes; and that made him more angry still. He reproached me continually. I answered him angrily; and so it went on. At last I told him I desired to come to Morton, and see you all. He declared that since I had been so unwilling to please him, he should not trouble himself to please me. He said I only wished to go away from him, when I had but settled down at home; he would not come with me.

"For a time, I submitted; for I did not know what to do. I was so lonely, so helpless, so sorrowful, Caroline! You would have pitied me, if you had thought me ever so much to blame, I was so miserable! I was dying with homesickness. I asked him again to take me to Morton; still he refused. I told him I would come alone, then—if I walked every step. He dared me to do it. He told me—and swore it, Caroline!—that if I came, I should never enter his doors again. But it was too late. I had grown reckless—desperate; and I came!"

The story was ended.

"My poor Jessie! You have been very unhappy," said Caroline, with tender pity.

"Unhappy! O, yes!" and her tears streamed afresh. "How I wish I were free again! O, if I had not married! I would gladly live single all my life. Do you remember, Caroline, how angry I was because you said you never would marry?—I despised an old maid so much; and now I would give all I possess to be one."

"It is too late for regret, now," said Caroline, sadly. "You could only learn by experience, and that experience has been severe. I am sorry for you, Jessie. Let us pray that the heaviest of the evil is passed."

* * * * *

But Jessie Wellingcourt had come home to stay. She never returned to her husband. A reconciliation was attempted by Caroline, but the effort was fruitless.

Maurice Morton repented most bitterly his own short-sightedness in marrying Jessie to a man of more than twice her age, merely because the match promised to be an advantageous one. He had passed lightly over the fact of their dissimilarity of disposition, of habit, and of taste, never considering that a union of two so exactly opposed, in all these points, to each other, could never be happy together; and now he suffered deeply in his sister's unhappiness. Jessie and her husband never met again. Mr. Wellingcourt settled upon her a handsome allowance, which she received quarterly, through his lawyer, and henceforth they two were twain.

Caroline continued to dwell at the Home Farm. Jessie made her home alternately there and at Morton Place, and always seemed to be happy; but it was a happiness the mere wreck of that of old days, changed as much as she was herself. She never quite regained her former beauty, or exuberant spirits; but gradually a quiet calm stole over her, from the deeper and more serious thought induced by her sorrows and her trials. They made her wiser.

The years from the time when Caroline had so angered her brother by her decided rejection of Mr. Colverton, Maurice one day made his appearance at the farm. He was graver than usual, as his sister instantly observed, and the cause was soon betrayed.

"Caroline," he said, "Hartley Colverton is dead."

"Dead!" echoed his sister.

"He died a month ago, in France, at the gaming table; shot through the heart by a man whom he had just beggared."

Caroline shuddered; but a sigh, that was almost a sigh of gladness, escaped her, as she reflected on her own freedom.

"I can interpret that sigh," said Maurice; "and it is a gentle reproach to me, Caroline. It is not my fault that you did not become a gambler's wife—that you are not at this moment a gambler's widow. Hartley Colverton was addicted to gaming at the very time when I so strenuously urged you to marry him; but let me do myself the justice to say that I was unconscious of the fact at the time. Caroline, can you pardon me for all that passed that day when I became so offended with you for your refusal to comply with my wishes in regard to him! I was harsh, unkind—unmanly, even. Forgive me!"

He held out his hand. Caroline clasped it warmly.

"You were not to blame, Maurice," she returned. "You thought it all for the best; but I could not yield. I had heard of his propensities, and resolved to avoid him. I liked best the path I had chosen. I do not think I would have married the best man on earth. Each one has his own taste you know, Maurice; and I cannot help thinking that I am one of those few women who are happier in single than the married state. There are two ways, and one is as happy as the other, if a woman chooses to make it so; and a great deal more so." And she glanced laughingly at her brother.

And Caroline lived, content and cheerful, at the Home Farm, through her many and pleasant years. She never married, reader. I cannot spoil my story.

NAVAL ANECDOTE.

There are many incidents in the early naval history of our country which are worth preserving. Among them is the following anecdote of the heroic Tingey. When he commanded the Ganges, in 1799, being off Cape Nicola Mole, he was boarded by a boat from the English frigate Surprise, and all the Englishmen on board were demanded for the service of his royal majesty, George III! The right was also claimed to examine the protections of the American seamen on board. Captain Tingey returned the following noble answer: "*A public ship carries no protection for her men but her flag.* I do not expect to succeed in a contest with you, *but I will die at my quarters before a man shall be taken from the ship.*" The crew then gave three hearty cheers, and hastened with alacrity to their quarters, calling for Yankee Doodle. The captain of the Surprise, on hearing the determination of the Yankees, chose rather to pursue his course, than to do battle for dead men!—*Portfolio.*

FISHING WITH A STEEL TRAP.

One of our merchants, who has an eye to the interest of the trade, has invented a new mode of catching black fish, namely, with a steel trap. It has proved itself very valuable an operation, that all our fishermen are providing themselves with steel traps; and the demand for the article is greater than the supply. The instrument used is of the old fashioned kind, with iron teeth closing together. The *modus operandi* is decidedly unique. The trap is set and baited, properly provided with a sinker, and let into the the water. An ominous click below denotes the amusement at hand; the fish attempts to steal the bait, but immediately the trap *shuts* the fish, which is drawn up to the surface, often three at a time, and at the rate of one a minute. The returns for one day's sport are reported at above a hundred! This is certainly an age of progress and steel traps.—*New Haven Register.*

Before you ask a man a favor, consult the weather. The same person that is as ugly as sin while a cold rain is rattling against the window panes, will be sooner fed the gladdening influence of a little quiet sunshine than his heart will expand like a rosebud.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE WIND.

BY N. S. PERKINS.

Along the rugged mountain, down by the silent stream,
Now nestled in the murky sky, where forked lightnings gleam,
The crashing thunders roll along upon their unseen wing,
While round the hearth, in silent fear, my little children cling.

But soon thy gentle breath dispels each cloud from out the sky,
Behold the golden orb of day in splendor meets the eye:
Ah, now thy voice is hushed awhile to murmure soft and low,
The earth, now bright and gay, alas, a sudden change must know.

Hark! listen to those moaning sounds around our cottage door,
So chilling, as they penetrate the cracks along the floor,
That now the fire must be renewed to heat it as it comes,
To keep it from approaching and freezing off my thumbs.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LIZZIE LIND'S PIANO.

BY MRS. REBECCA WILLS.

"What do you think!" said Virginia Shirley, as she entered the room, where her sister was engaged in conversation with a young gentleman; "would you believe it? Lizzie Lind has a piano!"

"Mirabile dictu!" exclaimed Caroline, raising her hands and eyes; "I cannot believe it."

"You may believe it, for Louisa Davis told me she was in Peter's store, when it was carried home—a fine, rosewood piano!"

"How can Mr. Lind afford it! Besides, what on earth does Lizzie Lind want with a piano? she can't play.

"Yes, she can play, too!" said a little girl, about ten years old, who sat in a distant part of the room, caressing a pet squirrel.

"How do you know, child?"

"Why, she has been taking lessons from our teacher, Mr. La Motte, and he says she is the best scholar he ever had."

"You must be mistaken in the person."

"No, I'm not mistaken. I know Lizzie Lind. I guess I ought to know her by that everlasting blue cashmere. She never wears anything else."

"It must be her, if she wears a blue cashmere, for I believe it is the only dress she has," said Caroline. "Virginia," she continued, turning to her sister, "I think as Miss Lind is becoming musical, we had better quit. As pianos are becoming so common, we must get pa to dispose of ours and get a harp!"

"Who is Lizzie Lind?" asked Charles Beaufort, the young gentleman alluded to in the beginning of our sketch.

"She is the daughter of a poor mechanic," replied Caroline Shirley, "and has no more business with a piano, than I have with the crown of England. She lives next door to Mrs. Brown, an intimate friend of mine, and I have had frequent opportunities of seeing her from the back window doing house work, and for my part, I do not see how a girl can work in the kitchen one minute, and play the piano the next. I know if I were to attempt such a thing, that my fingers would be too stiff to stretch an octave;" and she looked down complacently at one of the whitest and prettiest hands in the world, with which she was twirling a bouquet—the gift of Charles Beaufort.

"There's Mrs. Brown, now," said Virginia, peering from the window, "coming here, too. O, she will tell us all about it;" and she hurried to the door to meet the visitor. Mrs. Brown was introduced to Mr. Beaufort, and was scarcely seated, when Caroline asked if she knew that Lizzie Lind had a piano.

"Goodness knows I have full reason to know it, for I was never so annoyed by anything in my whole life. She has had it about two weeks, and I don't believe she does a thing but bang on it, day in and day out. It is nothing but strum, strum, strum. I have wished a dozen times that 'The Captive Knight' was in the Gulf of Mexico!"

"La! she isn't advanced enough to play that;" and Caroline looked aghast.

"She pretends to it," replied Mrs. Brown; "but I assure you, her piano is a perfect nuisance. All the neighbors are tired out with it; she is eternally practising. Mr. Brown says she sings like an angel, but he comes home tired, from the story, and anything in the shape of music pleases him."

"It is very natural," said Caroline, "for people who have not been accustomed to any new accession, to run away with it. When Miss Lind gets used to the piano, she will not play so perseveringly."

"I hope so," sighed Mrs. Brown. "But I am afraid the novelty will not wear off with her, soon; and don't you think Mr. Brown says she plays better, this minute, than our Charlotte—and you know Charlotte is called a performer!"

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Virginia.

"Yes, indeed, it is ridiculous; but men have such strange fancies!"

When Mrs. Brown concluded her visit, which was short, Mr Beaufort and Miss Caroline Shirley sallied forth, according to agreement, to pay some morning calls. Caroline had promised to introduce him to her most intimate friend, Miss Green. When they entered the parlor, and the usual salutations were over, Caroline asked Miss Green if she had heard the news.

"No! what news?"

"Why, Lizzie Lind has a piano!"

"Pshaw!" said Miss G. "People always make things worse than they are. She has no piano. Her father only rents it. If all he owns in the world was sold, it wouldn't bring enough to pay for a piano."

"Does Miss Lind still take lessons from La Motte?"

"O, no," answered Miss G. "Miss Melford waits on her at home."

"Is it possible?" cried Caroline, indignantly. "I wonder she is not afraid of losing the patronage of the *elite*, who have heretofore employed her."

"Miss Melford is too popular to fear anything, and as making money is the order of the day, I guess she thinks Mr. Lind's cash is as good as any one's."

After a long talk on the subject, the friends parted. When Mr. Beaufort and Caroline had finished their round of visiting, he escorted her home, and then proceeded to his lodgings and betook himself to serious reflection.

Charles Beaufort resided in a small town, on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River. He was by profession a lawyer, and a man of good feeling and good sense. He was well educated, and was of remarkably prepossessing appearance. Being, too, the only son of a wealthy father, he was considered a great "catch" amongst the young ladies. No wonder, then, that Miss Shirley laid siege to his heart, when she was introduced to him at Drennon Springs, and succeeded so far as to induce him to follow her to her home in Louisville, with the intention of soliciting her hand in marriage. He had been in the city nearly a week, and still delayed his declaration of love. Having formed, hastily, a very exalted opinion of the young lady, he feared a refusal. She was certainly very beautiful, and quite accomplished; and Beaufort had vainly supposed her disposition equal to her external attractions. She had, by her tact, succeeded in making him think so. She had, however, taken an improper view of her lover's character, when she supposed by her remarks on Miss Lind to elevate herself in his estimation.

It was very palpable to Caroline, and to all, who saw them together, that he was smitten by her charms; but why he did not propose, was a question she could not solve. She did not suspect it, while at the Springs, as she supposed, from his dignified deportment, that he would be very fastidious in the choice of a connection, and therefore was waiting to get better acquainted with her family. This made her very anxious for him to see her father's splendid residence, and the elegances and luxuries with which it was furnished, together with the courtly etiquette used in their domestic concerns. Thinking these things would divest his mind of every scruple, for this purpose she left Drennon before the season was over, so anxious was she to secure his hand. When he followed her so closely, she became quite sanguine; but as he had been in the city so long, visiting her daily, and had not solicited her hand, she began to think it necessary to do something more to convince him of her superior standing in society, and her total exemption from the plebeian race which she supposed he so much disdained. Her remarks about Miss Lind and her piano were made for this purpose.

She was, however, mistaken, when she believed Beaufort proud and haughty. His principles were purely republican, and so conscious was he of his superior standing in society, that he never thought it necessary, by any act, to convince others of it. In fact, he always felt more sympathy than contempt for those who moved in the lower circles of life. He was ever kind and frank and generous to his inferiors.

We must now return to him, in the solitude of his chamber. His reflections there were not very favorable to Miss Shirley. He had discovered, from her remarks, a degree of pride and ill nature of which he had believed her incapable, and after much thought, he wisely concluded to return home, and learn something more of her character, before he committed himself.

A year has elapsed. Charles Beaufort is still living with his father, on the banks of the Ohio, attending closely to his profession, and obtaining some celebrity as a lawyer. He is something of a politician, too; but on the subject of matrimony, his mind is rather in a listless state. From what he had learned of Miss Shirley, he was led to believe that she would not make a wife such as a man would like to have when health and fortune fail, one who would comfort him in the gloomy scenes of life, and be as ready to do that, as to glitter with him in the sunshine of prosperity. Charles had become a little shy of the sex, and had long since ceased to think of Miss Shirley or Lizzie Lind's piano.

After attending to his business closely, he strolled out, one evening, for air and exercise. He had not walked far, before he met his two little sisters returning from school.

"O, brother," cried one, while both caught his hands, "we are so glad."

"Glad, hey! because you have not been flogged!"

"O, no; we never get flogged. But we are glad about our new teacher. She came last night, and she is so pretty and so nice!"

"She is very beautiful, no doubt," said Charles, jeeringly.

"No, brother, not so beautiful, but she is *sweet*, that's what she is."

"Well, pray what is this sweet creature's name?"

"Her name is Lizzie Lind, but we call her Miss Lizzie."

Charles started; but said:

"And do you think 'Miss Lizzie' can teach such harum scarum chaps as you?"

"Yes, indeed. She took us at recess, and told us such a pretty story about a little girl who wouldn't practise her music, and how it made her pa so sorry because he spent so much money for nothing, and she says she knows none of us will do that way. I am sorry Miss Lizzie is so poor, though."

"How do you know she is poor?"

"Because, when she told her father good-by, she cried; and I heard her tell him the very first money she got, she was going to send it home to her mother—and she wouldn't do that, if she wasn't poor."

As Charles Beaufort sauntered leisurely home, with his sisters, he reflected on their information. This was surely the identical Lizzie Lind, of whom he had heard so much twelve months before. She must, he thought, be an uncommon girl to qualify herself for a teacher of music in so short a time. Then he remembered little Helen Shirley's remark that Mr. La Motte said she was his best scholar. "And then to put her talent to so good a cause," soliloquized Charles, "knowing her father strained a point to have her taught, and now she intends to repay him—how grateful! And to leave her own home to live with strangers—what self sacrifice! Yes, she is a rare genius! I would like to see the girl who can be (as Miss Shirley said) 'in the kitchen one minute at work, and playing the piano the next.' I wonder if her hand is as white as Miss Caroline's!"

When Charles Beaufort was introduced to Lizzie Lind, he was so pleased with her countenance and manner, and sprightly conversation, that he actually forgot to look at her hand.

"O, Caroline," exclaimed Virginia Shirley, as she burst into her sister's apartment, with the "daily" in her hand, "Charles Beaufort is married!"

Caroline turned deadly pale.

"Impossible! To whom?"

"Guess."

"I cannot. Some high flyer, I suppose;" and the beauty made an effort to compose herself, and "smiled a sickly smile."

"No, indeed," said Virginia. "High-flyer, indeed! He is married to *Lizzie Lind!*"

Caroline Shirley fainted.

A MICHIGAN DECISION.

Judge B——, a plain, and withal, a very worthy man, but no lawyer, was once county judge of Oakland, under the old system. A cause came on for trial before him on one occasion, in which the action was founded in tort, and the plea of the defendant, which was special, was such as to give him the affirmative of the issue, upon the strength of which he claimed the right to open and close the case. This point was denied by the counsel for the plaintiff, "who never, in the whole course of his practice, had heard of such an enormity as the defendant's presuming to open a case." Authorities were brought and cited, however, and the judge, after mature deliberation, determined that such was the defendant's right, and so pronounced his decision. After a short pause, during which the plaintiff was grumbling his dissatisfaction, the court ordered the defendant's lawyer to go on.

"Your honor," said he, rising, "I am not quite ready to open this case—when I get ready, *I will let the other—side—know!*" This *opened*, if not the case, at least the eyes and mouth of the "*other side*," who sprang to his feet and bellowed forth an awful denunciation upon the profound stupidity of the judge, whose absurd decision had placed him in such a dilemma. "You see, your honor, what you have done—you have actually placed my case in the hands of the defendant. He took possession of our oxen, and when we brought an action to recover them, *he took possession of that also.*"

"I can't help it, sir," said the learned judge, with great sternness, "the decision is made, and it is too late to alter it; the law must take its course. You must withdraw your action and sue again." "If he does, your honor," said the defendant's counsel, "I shall plead the pendency of this action in bar, and beat him."

"Then," said the judge, "I see no other way for you but to sit down quietly and wait till the defendant gets ready to try this cause." The plaintiff took the judge's advice, but the "time appointed" has never "elapsed," and he is waiting yet.—*Detroit Advertiser.*

A FINE STREAM.

A good story is told of a Philadelphia judge, well known for his love of jokes. He had advertised a farm for sale, with a fine stream of water running through it. A few days after, a gentleman called on him to speak about it.

"Well, judge," said he, "I have been over that farm you advertised for sale the other day, and find all right except the 'fine stream of water' you mentioned."

"It runs through the piece of woods in the lower part of the meadow," said the judge.

"What, that little brook! why, it does not hold much more than a spoonful. I am sure if you enjoy a bowl of water into it, it would overflow. You don't call that a fine stream, do you?"

"Why, if it were much finer, you couldn't see it at all," said the judge, blandly.

We never heard whether the gentleman bought the farm, but we rather suspect he didn't.—*New York Dutchman.*

THE EYES.

A great quantity of virgin paper has been blackened in idle attempts to cry up blue eyes, and blue eyes, and all sorts of common place optics; but after all, gray eyes must take the palm. Of all the eyes in the world, they are at once the most mischievous and most intelligent, and a woman who has them, needs nothing else to make insensibility itself fall worshipping at her feet. A very sensible lady-writer has said: Your blue are holy, heavenly, as the sky they reflect; your large brown, sluggish and indolent. We never knew an energetic person with soft brown eyes. Your black are ever keen, piercing, and fault-finding; but your gray! Commend us to a good clear gray eye, either in man or woman. Such a one, bright and deeply set, intent on seeing rather than being seen—though when seen it is never forgotten—such an eye, beneath a well-defined brow, can obtain whatever it deserves."—*Transcript.*

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[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

A RESPONSE

TO "O, WOULD I WERE A CHILD AGAIN."

BY LUTHER LEE.

A child again I would not be,
To sail o'er life's eventful sea;
For clouds have gathered dim and dark,
And tempest-tossed has been my bark.

I'd dream no more the dreams of youth,
For I have learned the bitter truth,
That childhood's dreams, however fair,
Vanish like castles built in air.

I do not wish that I were back,
On childhood's pleasure-bonten track,
For since I was a wayward child,
My steps have been through dangers wild.

I would not have the hopes and fears
Of childhood's well-remembered years,
Whose hope's delusive star would beam,
Then vanish like an empty dream.

I would not weep as I have wept,
O'er those in death who calmly slept,
Who passed away before my eye,
Like smiling rainbows from the sky.

O no, O no, I would not be
A child again, from sorrows free,
For I am near that blessed home,
Where happy angels ever roam.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

ON THE RAIL.

BY JOHN THORNBERRY.

Mr. Towson took the cars, one fine autumnal morning, to come into town. That was his daily habit. He kept his business in town, and his family out of it. Every morning, that is, if he was well enough, he stepped briskly on board the cars, and an hour's ride brought him on to the rattle and rush of the city. On this particular morning to which we allude, he thought he felt in uncommonly fine spirits: fresh, free, and flowing; as blithe as a lamb, as happy as a king, as lively as a cricket.

The seats in the car happened to be all filled, except one, in which sat only a lady. Perhaps he would, out of gallantry, have gone poking off for a chance in another car; but the train had got a little the start of him, leaving him no solitary chance but that by the side of the lady. He looked up the car, and he looked down the car, he turned this way and he turned that way. And stumbling and pitching along down the aisle, he finally went and bounced himself into the vacant seat by the side of his fair and unknown companion.

"This seat's not occupied!" he remarked to her, interrogatively. But the lady only answered by moving a little further along, and looking still more attentively out of the window.

No sooner had Mr. Towson now begun to feel a little easy in his new situation, and to get shaken down by the motion of the car into a state of downright comfortableness, than he thought he must put in operation the natural investigating faculties that rather distinguished him. So after a good hearty gaze this way and that, before him, and all around him, he turned just a little, it was indeed a very trifle for him, and thought he would find out as near as he could with whom he had the pleasure of travelling.

But the lady had her face still turned toward the window. She had to appearance kept it there all the time. A thick veil covered her features, and baffled Mr. Towson's amiable curiosity besides. She did nothing but keep that ugly veil before her face, and stare as hard as she could through it at the window.

"This won't do," said Mr. Towson to himself. "Why will ladies be so very distant? There should certainly be a cure for this. Why not? Suppose I try and find out what it is."

But how to go to work, was the very problem. First he changed his position on his seat, no doubt thinking the lady would, out of mere sympathy, perhaps, change hers also. But she did no such thing. Next, he leaned forward against the back of the seat before him, and looked out the same window at which his companion was staring so hard. But that did no good. And while in this position, he suffered his eyes to rove about until they fell upon the stranger's thick veil, which they labored hard to penetrate. But to no purpose. He could make out nothing. The lady was like a statue; so still, so silent, so cold. It piqued him more than ever to know who she was.

He began now a series of faint "hems," and coughs, and such like performances: so faint, indeed, that they must have sounded to the lady like the merest affectations. But even these brought no tokens of her attention. At length Mr. Towson grew desperate and warm together. He glanced at the lady's neatly gloved hand, and saw it was small and pretty. He tried one more chance at her veil, and saw just as much as he had seen before. And finally, roused to the highest pitch of confusion and gallantry, strangely mixed together, he had the boldness to open his lips and address her.

"Perhaps I crowd you!" said he.

She turned her head partially round, and seemed trying to understand what he had said; or indeed to ascertain if he had really spoken to her at all. He repeated his inquiry, with all the blandness he could muster. Strange to relate! she instantly gathered up a corner of her veil with her hand, and, with a pleasant smile, assured him that there was plenty of room. And as if the better to satisfy him of it, she moved still further away from him. Mr. Towson took it only as a hint to come along; which he did with all precipitancy.

He had caught a glimpse of that face! I am not going to try to describe it; but it was beautiful. And a look of sadness so heightened the beauty, that she possessed in Mr. Towson's eyes the resignation of expression that is popularly conceived to be the usual characteristic of a saint. Still she continued holding aside the corner of her veil, just so little, as if waiting to see if her companion might have anything further to say; and at the same time inviting an extended conversation, if such should happen to be his inclination. And being once in, it would not do, Mr. Towson thought, to give the matter up so easily. If he did not avail himself of his present opportunity, the ice would have to be broken all over again.

So he improved his privilege, and began discoursing as finely as he knew how about the weather. Blessed old topic! but for that, many, many dull hours would be passed,—a few minutes at a time,—all the world over! In parlors, in breakfast rooms, in cars, in coaches, in offices, in bar rooms, and at the cramped and crowded railway stations!

Mr. Towson got on with his friend prodigiously, as Dominie Sampson would have said. In a very brief time, he had enlisted her sympathies most extensively. They were talking together at a brisk rate indeed. Mostly himself, however; no, on a second look, she quite as much as he.

In the course of this memorable conversation, Mr. Towson made the following discovery: that she was a runaway wife! She had left the roof of her husband that very morning! For ill-treatment: because she could not live with him; because he denied her the customary rights and privileges of a married woman, and because she had been threatening to take such a step for now a long while!

Mr. Towson was amazed; but he got soon over it. The sight of her beauty brought him over to her side, in just no time at all. He felt in with her views of the case instantly. He even offered her his sympathies, and asked if he could serve her in any way in her difficulties.

There was where he went, perhaps, a little too far! That is, I mean prudent people will say so. The lady threw an inquiring glance into his face. His eyes met hers. Could he refer her to some proper boarding-place in the city? She was a stranger there, and would take it as the greatest of favors. Ah! that was what he could do. Find her a boarding-place? He could find her a hundred. But she suggested she would not want so many as that. One would abundantly answer.

No sooner, therefore, had the train arrived at its destination, than Mr. Towson gallantly handed her into a carriage, saw her baggage properly secured behind, and gave directions to the coachman where to drive his fare. He looked in upon her as he closed the door,—with her veil now lifted from that handsome face,—and promised to meet her in a very short time at the house to which he was going to send her, bidding her meanwhile, tell the landlady that she came there as a friend of his, and on his particular recommendation. All of which was properly and promptly complied with.

Now Mr. Towson in all this certainly meant no sort of harm. We, who know him so well, have some sort of right to speak with authority on the subject. He had the misfortune, or the contrary, to have a "soft spot" on his head, that frequently led him into pleasant philanthropic excursions, where prudence might have forbidden him to go. To feel often of this soft spot, was his fate. He could not very well help it. No man knows how at all times to deny his native proclivities.

Early that forenoon Mr. Towson went round to call on his new friend, and to inform Mrs. Blaze, the landlady, that she was an acquaintance of his, and respectable. The rest of the story he thought he would keep to himself. So the runaway got a very pleasant location by the means, and began rapidly to feel at her ease in her new quarters.

From that hour Mr. Towson dropped in to see her quite often. The next night, indeed, he staid in town altogether, that he might have the pleasure of her society for an evening. He listened to her tale of cruelty and wrongs with intense sympathy, and showed her what he would most certainly do for her relief, if ever it should be necessary, by gnashing his teeth and clenching his hands. He assured her again and again that she might rely on him for assistance with perfect implicitness, for that he feared nothing, and was conscious of doing nothing more nor less than his duty.

And she told her story with such artlessness and simplicity; dwelling with such manifest repugnance on the awful treatment to which she had been subjected from her severe husband; narrating with such an air of truth the various methods adopted by him to crush her youthful happiness out of her heart; and appealing to her new protector by her eloquent looks for help whenever help might most be needed; that he stood up manfully on the floor before her, and declared that no person, man or woman, husband or relation, should ever wrong her out of her right to enjoy what all the world enjoyed without molestation.

Women, however, will never be anything but women. So Mrs. Blaze proved to a certainty. For, having become not a little suspicious on her own part of the rather frequent attentions of Mr. Towson upon her new boarder, what does she do but sit down and dispatch a sly sort of a note to that gentleman's wife, making a very general statement of the facts of the case, and intimating to her that it might be as well if she should herself come into town some pleasant day, and see if she could recall the features of the lady in question!

Certainly, one of the most mischievous proceedings to be thought of by mortal woman; and one of the most characteristic.

Mrs. Towson got the note, and resolved to act on its valuable suggestions without delay. Meantime she thought she would rather go to prison than to have to sit up to the table and turn tea or coffee for her deceiving lord. But she smothered her indignation as well as she could, and thought only of the denouement that was rapidly approaching.

Next day Mr. Towson called again on his friend as usual. She was dressed so charmingly that he wondered in his heart how any man could be savage enough ever to speak a harsh word to her outright. Perhaps he might have arrived at that in due time, had not other matters interfered.

For he had hardly got into earnest conversation with her, beginning with the recital of her wrongs as usual, and going on until he had well nigh forgotten that he had a wife of his own,—when in burst the door with a terrible crash, and a man with an inflamed face and a very wild expression came tearing through, demanding to know who he was,—and what he was doing there, and the like of such things, which he was nowise able just at that moment to answer.

"My husband! O my husband!" screamed the persecuted lady.

Mr. Towson stood bravely before her then, and told the man to keep his hands off; and next, he wanted to know what he was there for? They had a downright wrangle and jangle. The injured husband was for cowhiding, shooting, skinning, hanging the rascally Towson on the spot. He declared that he had utterly ruined his prospects for life,—had invaded the sanctity of his home,—had stolen away the wife of his bosom, and that he would have satisfaction to the very last letter of the law.

The wife then fell down on her knees before her husband, and began to implore his pardon for her offence. She would never do the like again. She had never done such a thing before. She was sorry enough. She would tear out every handful of her hair, unless he would certainly promise her his forgiveness. He stopped a moment between breaths, as if he were really disposed to think of it.

Just at that inconvenient moment, in stepped Mrs. Towson herself! Could Mr. Towson believe his eyes? Was that she? How came she there? How did she know of it? Who could have told her? Did everybody know of it? And was he already disgraced in the eyes of the community?

She was full of exclamations. As for him, he was struck dumb. This was no time for explanations. There was too much excitement, and too much passion to admit of it. But his wife kept plying him with accusations, and taunts, and flings, and hard suspicions, till he could endure it no longer. He started and pushed out through the door. She after him.

"You'll hear from me shortly, sir!" threatened the husband of the runaway. "I'll have satisfaction, sir! I'll bring you before the public! I'll show the world your baseness, sir!"

And the result was, that although he really did succeed in explaining the matter to Mrs. Towson sufficiently to calm down her suspicions, he nevertheless did not fail to receive a formal call from the injured husband, with whom no explanations would avail, demanding a large sum of money, or threatening public exposure as an alternative. Mr. Towson was thoroughly frightened, and forked over to the full figure of the demand. Anything, he thought, rather than have the thing go farther!

And collecting the fruits of their joint industry, the indignant husband and the suffering wife slipped out of town on the first opportunity. If the reader had been on the same car with the lady on the morning when Mr. Towson made her acquaintance, he would have seen the same injured husband sitting only a few seats back, closely watching for some good-natured individual to snap at the attractive bait he had prepared! Mr. Towson bit, and proved a gold-fish indeed to the enterprising proprietor!

A ROYAL LUNATIC.

Christian the seventh of Denmark, who died in 1808, it is well known was long a lunatic. He knew one written document from another by its outward appearance, but seemed to delight in affixing his signature anywhere but on the fitting spot. Here he would decorate it with letters, as large as the sheet itself, and there he would sketch all sorts of grotesque figures upon it, or subscribe some important decree of the cabinet, like a cockney coachman, with the words "Christian and Company." It was no rare occurrence for the stricken monarch to labor hard at inditing his signature for an hour or two and then scribbling his pen to the furthest corner of the apartment, cry out, "We will no more; we've signed enough to day." He was one day conversing with a foreign envoy, when he suddenly stroked his protoscol, exclaiming: "If your master's nose had been pulled as long as my servants have pulled mine, his would be just as long as my own." Those who dined at his table usually made no account of his royal presence, but chattered, roared, and amused themselves as if he had been a thousand miles from the spot. On one occasion some ladies on either side of him having bent across him for the purpose of whispering something secret into one another's ear, he pushed each of their heads back into its proper place, then threw his clenched hands on the table, looked around with fury in his eyes, and raising his voice to its loudest pitch, roared out amidst their revels, "Suppose I should suddenly come to the right use of my senses again—what next would you expect?" You might have heard a feather drop on the ground as the posing, thundering query echoed in their ears. There was not a soul present but quaked at the proof of returning sanity; nor did his majesty choose to relieve them of their anxiety for several minutes. At last he nodded to them, and resumed, with a good-humored smile, "Well, well, my friends, we'll let it pass for this once!"—*Portfolio.*

A DEVOTED WIFE.

An English paper gives a singular instance of conjugal affection and feminine strength and endurance. An old couple in Newcastle became reduced to want, and it was necessary that the husband, who suffered extremely from confirmed rheumatism, should be removed to some charitable institution. He besought removal to Haverton hill, and his wife had promised it. The journey was a long and expensive one, and not only so, but, by the usual conveyance, must have caused the patient much additional suffering. The brave and affectionate heart of the wife was stung to a noble resolution to satisfy the wish of the poor husband in the face of these difficulties. She undertook to carry him on her back the whole of the way from Newcastle to Haverton, by the highway route, a distance of 50 miles! This she undertook and performed, and the couple arrived safely at the end of their journey within fourteen hours from the time of their starting—a temporary rest at Durham having been the only intermission the faithful woman permitted herself between the banks of the Tyne and the Tees.

ART OF HEALTH.

Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walking very far. The Europeans value themselves on having subdued the horse to the use of man, but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained by the animal. No one thing has occasioned so much degeneracy of the human body. An Indian goes on foot nearly as far in a day, for a long journey, as an enfeebled white does on his horse, and he will tire the best horses. A little walk of half an hour in the morning, on rising, is advisable.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE OLD HOUSE ROUND THE CORNER.

BY MARY A. LOWELL.

Almost under the shadow of the church from whose towers the "Seven Bells" give out their hallowed chime, there is an old square wooden house, which, although it gives ample evidence of antiquity, is yet well kept and respectable in appearance. In one of its large chambers (the one on the corner), there resides an old couple, whose years number fourscore. Although it is many long years since the captain went to sea, yet in the Directory you will always find "mariner" against his name, as if he loved to read that portion of the past, and mingle it with the present.

They had children once—perhaps one is now living; but years have passed away since they have heard from him, and they believe him dead. The second, Frederic, grew up to manhood, strong, healthy, and manly, and promised to be the stay of his parents in their old age. But while the love of life was strongest in his heart, and his intellect had become developed, and he was beginning to reap the reward which his talents fully deserved, he was cut down by the hand of death.

Only one child remained, a daughter, and after the brother's death, she drooped and faded, until she too received the call from that voice which never calls in vain. Twelve years have passed since she left them, and now they are alone. Not alone, for they trust in One who never betrayed them. God is near them—the spirits of their dead children are with them; and while they wait for the hour that shall bring them still nearer, they do not fear to have it come. At night, the old house round the corner is musical with the hymns that rise to heaven from the old man's voice. Then it is that memory is busy at his heart, and he lives over again the days of his youth, when life was opening upon him, fresh and beautiful. He recalls the young girl whom he won from her home by the sea-side, and dwells lingeringly on her first years of maternity, when three children, lovely and beloved, played around her. Then he talks of when Charlie bade them a farewell which they little thought would be the last; and passes to the time when Frederic's manly head was laid low, and Serena's angel-face was taken from his sight.

As they sit there in their lonely chamber, lighted only by the street lamp, which shines brightly and cheerfully upon them, the room is peopled with shadows from the past, and the transition from the quiet room to heaven would seem easy and natural. It would be but the dropping of a thin veil between them and the eternal world.

Some morning, perhaps, when the outer world is in bustle and confusion, when the din of the city shall drown all lesser sounds, the angel of death will lay his hand gently upon one or the other of this aged pair, and bear them into the presence of the loved ones in heaven. Then there will be a few days of utter loneliness to the one who is left, and again there will be a funeral train with not a single relative to join it; and the next tenant may be perhaps some young and blooming bride and her husband, who in time may grow old and die, leaving the old time honored building still standing as a memorial of the past.

How many of these ancient buildings stand in the midst of our city! Their gigantic frames, built in the old times when there were no *men-milliners*, would outlast many a modern structure. How well they look, too, either in city or country, with their four plain, square sides, reaching up three stories, unmarred by those ugly, misshapen wings, which spoil and disfigure our country houses. Even this very old house round the corner, ancient as it is, has an air of stateliness that seems to rebuke the upstart pretensions of more recently erected buildings.

How suggestive, too, are they of the past! As we gaze around the ample rooms, we imagine the troops of beautiful maidens and noble men and lovely children whose footsteps have pressed these floors. We think how many brides have been brought here to brighten and bless *somebody's* home. We think of beautiful faces that have lain in the chambers with the chill of death upon them; of the sunny curls of childhood grown motionless and still; of the light gone out from beaming eyes, and of the melody hushed on rosy lips. We think for how many years these dwellings have passed from one generation to another, until the last one of the race has fallen asleep, and then cometh the stranger's footfall upon the floors, and the stranger's voice waking the echoes. And so it will soon be with the old house round the corner.

ELECTIONEERING.

The courts and the husking frolics of a frontier State usually furnish abundant material for story and fun. Judge R., formerly of the Western Circuit, Fla., canvassed that circuit in 1844, as a candidate for the Territorial Senate, and was cheered by the promise of a little Frenchman, living in one of the counties of the senatorial district, to do "all he could" for him. Not a solitary vote, however, was cast for the judge in that county, and he seized the first opportunity thereafter to tax his backer with false promises. "Sar," said the Frenchman, very much offended, "I tell you no lie; I travel over dis country three, four, five days, and I say to every man 'Will you vote for my friend, as judge?' and he say 'No, I will be darned if I do.'" "But," said the judge, "you did not vote for me yourself." "No, judge; when I come back, I shut myself up in my own room, and I 'lectioneer myself two day—but I no get my consent to vote for you."

ENMITY.

It is not generally known that, although emery has been sought for in all parts of the world, it has only been found in two places—in the island of Naxos, in Grecce, and at a few spots in Turkey. The annual production is at present limited to two thousand tons of Naxos stone and sixteen hundred tons of Turkish. This material is largely used by machinists and metal workers, as well as by lapidaries; but it is specially required in the grinding and polishing of plate glass, and, from the enormous increase in the consumption of the latter article, is in great demand.—*Mining Journal.*

Jester's Picnic.

"Wife, wife, our cow is dead—choked with them turnips."

"I told you so. I always said she would choke herself with them turnips."

"But it was a pumpkin."

"Well, it's all the same. I knowed all along how it would be. Nobody but a ninny like you would ever feed a cow on pumpkins that were not chopped."

"The pumpkins were chopped. And it wan't the pumpkins neither that choked her. 'Twas the tray—and the end on it's sticking out of her mouth now!"

"Ugh! Ugh! There goes my bread tray. No longer ago than yesterday I told you that the cow would swallow that tray!"

"Can you take off my *baird* here?" said a grave, tall, slab-sided Yankee to an Albany barber; feeling, at the same time, his chin with a noise like a grater; "it's a light baird: what d'yer tax—three cents for a *light* baird, aint it?"

"Yes."

"Wall, go ahead, then."

While the barber was rasping three cents' worth from his chin, his sitter saw an assistant putting cologne upon a customer's hair, through a quill in the cork of a bottle.

"Look o' here, squire," said the Yankee, "can't you squirt some o' that *pepper sarse* on to my head, tew? Say, can't you throw a little o' that in for the three cents?"

A man in San Francisco, named Pulaski Jacks, had his name painted on a big sheet of tin, hung up at the door of his shop. One day an ostre appearing individual walked in, and wished to "take a look at them new fangled things."

"What things?"

"Why, them Pulaski Jacks."

"That's my name! Pulaski Jacks; don't you see?"

"It is? Well, darned if I knowed it! I didn't know whether it meant boot-jacks or jack nasts, —ha? ha!" and taking a good look at the astonished shopman, he walked out.

Some evenings since, at one of our theatres, while an "eminent" was doing up, in the usual butcher block style, the character of Macbeth, one of his favorite "points" was, to speak metaphorically, knocked into a three-cornered hat. When he had struggled, like a fish out of water, through to the passage, "We will proceed no further in this business," a tall, lanky Jerseyman arose in the parquet, and, placing his "kow-shoot" upon his head, exclaimed:

"I'm dogged glad of it; for sich bad acting I never did see!"

"Doctor," said a hard-looking, brandy-faced customer, the other day to a physician, "doctor, I'm troubled with an oppression, an uneasiness about the breast. What do you suppose the matter is?"

"All very easily accounted for," said the physician; "you have water on the chest."

"Water! Come, that will do well enough for a joke; but how could I get water on my chest, when I have not touched a drop in fifteen years! If you had said brandy, you might have hit it."

Foote, dining at the house of Mrs. Thrale, found nothing to his liking, and sat in expectation of something better coming up. A neck of mutton being the last thing, he refused it, as he had the other dishes. As the servant was taking it away, however, understanding that there was nothing more, he called out to him, "Hollo, John, bring that back again! I now find it neck or nothing."

The funny mistake of the Austrian officials is transforming the name on Mr. Richmond's passport into "James Cook, born in Richmond," is surpassed by a more recent occurrence. A gentleman just arrived from abroad, says he once found two Austrian customs officers endeavoring to make out his name from his travelling trunk. One called while the other wrote. They had got "Mr. Varrani Solezy." The trunk was marked "Warranted sole leather."

Horne Tooke ridiculed the practice of seabathing, and said, if any of the seal species were sick, it would be as wise for a fish-physician to order them to go on shore. Person declared that sea-bathing was only reckoned healthy because many persons have been *known to survive it*; but Sheridan's objection to salt water was the most quaint: "Pickles," said he, "don't agree with me."

A wag thus concentrates his description of a visit to the White Mountains:

"Nine weary uphill miles we sped
The setting sun to see;
Sulky and grim went we to bed
Sulky and grim went we.
Seven sleepless hours we tossed, and then,
The rising sun to see,
Sulky and grim we rose again,
Sulky and grim rose he."

We don't know whether Mr. Shillaber wrote his "Signs of Fall" for this year or not, but the following verse has a touching, and we may say thrilling, interest to the housekeepers of 1855.

The biting airs the shrinking flesh appal
By sharp incisions,
And everything proclaims the approach of fall,
Except provisions.

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